

Amusement and Play

And its Limits in Islam

By

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Translated by

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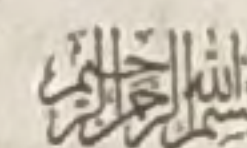
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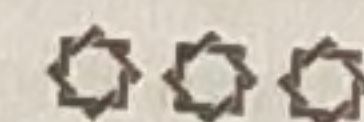
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A Word From the Translator



As a student of the Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi, I was presented this booklet in its urdu version with the title: کھیل اور تفریح کی شرعی حدود from the compiler himself, my respected and revered teacher Maulana Mufti Mahmood Ashraf Usmani (may Allah benefit us all from his knowledge). After reading it, I was inspired to translate it into english so that my english-speaking brothers may also benefit from the vast but comprehensive knowledge contained in the booklet. I myself have been questioned many times especially by youngsters about what Islam has to say concerning sports and games and always thought that something should be written on this subject. I consulted my respected teacher, Maulana Mufti Mahmood Ashraf Usmani (may Allah enable us to benefit from his knowledge) regarding the translation of this booklet and he most kindly and whole-heartedly granted me permission and also advised me to include some more games and sports which are common in the western countries. So I proceeded in the name of Allah Almighty and, Alhamdulillah, only with the infinite mercy and grace of Almighty Allah, this booklet was completed.

I have tried my best to translate it word-to-word, but obviously it is not possible as every language has its own

medium of expression. Therefore, any defects or mistakes in the translation should only be attributed to this humble translator, not the revered compiler.

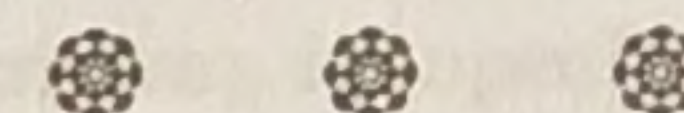
Lastly, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to my revered teacher Maulana Mufti Mahmood Ashraf Usmani (may Allah benefit us from his knowledge) for his permission, encouragement and valuable pearls of advice which guided me from beginning to end and made my task very much easier.

I also thank all those brothers who helped in any way to compose and publish this translation.

I pray to Allah Almighty that he makes this booklet a means of guidance for its readers and keep us all steadfast on His deen till the day we meet Him. Amin

Muhammad Umer Ibn Ibrahim

A Word From the Compiler



Islam is a complete way of life wherein all aspects of human life have been outlined with comprehensive guidelines, through which any person can attain unparalleled prosperity and comfort in this life alongwith the eternal success of the Hereafter.

While the unique teachings of Islam comprise of laws and guidelines concerning *aqida* (belief), worship, socio-economic relations and moral conduct; at the same time, they also cover those very delicate day-to-day issues of life which are vulnerable targets to personal instincts and emotions. One of these very delicate and vulnerable issues is the question: what is the status of amusement and play in Islam?

Living in an era which has fallen prey to both ends of extremity, we see at one end the western civilization where recreation is life's main object with their lives virtually revolving on sports and amusements while on the other hand some religious circles, through their way of life, have implicitly given rise to the ideology that Islam is confined only to *ibadat* (worship), *taqwa* (fear of Allah) and the dos and don'ts. And give the impression that there is no scope for live-heartedness, amusement and

cheerfulness in Islam, irrespective of the fact that live-heartedness and amusement played a vital role in the ideal way of life as conducted by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم, where at the same time *taqwa* (fear of Allah) and *ibadat* (worship) were at the highest unparalleled level.

As a teacher at the Jamia Ashrafia, Lahore and a lecturer in a Jamia Mosque, I gave many presentations on this subject. Then after being transferred to Jamia Darul Uloom, Karachi, I was entrusted the task of writing a detailed *fatwa* (legal verdict) on the above subject which has been approved by the elders of the Jamia, mainly naming Mufti Muhammad Rafi Usmani, Grand Mufti of Pakistan and Justice Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani.

I am very much grateful for their guidance and assistance in the compilation of this *fatwa*. May Allah Almighty reward them most profusely. Amin.

This *fatwa* was first published in the Albalagh (Urdu) monthly magazine in four parts and it proved to be beneficial for its readers. Therefore, it is now being published in a book form to make it easier to benefit from. May Allah Almighty accept it and enable its readers to benefit from it as much as possible. Amin

وما ذلك على الله بعزيز

And this is not even a bit hard for Allah Almighty. (Al-Qur'an)

Requesting Your Dua's

Mahmood Ashraf Usmani

Amusement and Play

And its limits in Islam

Before understanding the Islamic rulings on amusement and play, we must bear in mind the fact that the most valuable asset in the life of every human being is those valuable moments which are rapidly and constantly ticking away day by day in the form of seconds, minutes and hours. If these valuable moments are spent in the correct manner, everlasting peace and success will be achieved in this world and the hereafter. On the contrary, if these same valuable moments are utilized in the wrong way and wasted, eternal loss and devastation will be the outcome. In order to emphasize the importance and value of these moments, Allah the Most High says in the Holy Qur'an after taking an oath by the time:

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

By the time, every human being is indeed in great loss; except for those who have Iman, accomplish good deeds, enjoin each other the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds and abstain from all sorts of evil deeds) and enjoin one another to acquire patience (Surah Al-Asr)

The late Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Shaikh Muhammad

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Shafi رحمه الله عليه in his famous commentary on the Holy Qur'an, Ma'ariful-Qur'an, has written regarding this Surah:

"Allah the Most High has put the human being onto the line of business and trade by giving each and every person a span of life, which is their most valuable capital and source of investment, so that they may use their God-given capabilities and skills to invest this capital in hundred percent profitable works and achieve eternal profits. Otherwise, not only will all hopes for profitable gains be in vain, but even the capital will ultimately be lost and severe punishment will become liable. Even if a person does not invest this valuable capital of his neither in profitable works nor in loss-bearing works, he will still eventually lose both the capital and profits. This is not any ordinary poetic simile, but is supported by ahadith narrated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

كل يغدو فباع فمعتقها أو موبقها (رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة)

Every person when he wakes up invests his ownself into the line of business. Then, either he saves himself from all losses or throws himself into utter destruction.

Even the Holy Qur'an itself has interpreted the beliefs and actions of the human being with the words of business and trade:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

O you who believe, should I not show you such a trade which will save you from a tormenting

punishment. (As-Saff:10)

Since it has been proven that time is the most precious investment and the human being is its investor, then in normal conditions, it is quite obvious that this investor is indeed in loss. Why? Because the capital is not a compact merchandise that can be put away for a couple of days and brought into use after a while. Instead, it is a liquid commodity which is constantly on the flow. Its investor must be smart and cunning in order to derive profit from a flowing commodity. This is why a great scholar, when he arrived at the shop of an ice-seller commented, "Looking at this ice-seller's trade, the commentary of Surah al-Asr can be understood, that if this ice-seller is even a little negligent in his duty, all his capital will melt and flow away." For this very reason, Allah the Most High by taking an oath by the time, has warned the human being not to be negligent in the four-element compound formula described in Surah al-Asr. In order to save himself from utter loss, he should recognize and appreciate the value of each and every minute of his lifetime and utilize it in the four elements." (Ma'ariful-Qur'an 8:812-813)

Even in this present day and age, prosperity is only achieved by those who utilize their time in its correct manner and safeguard those precious moments of their life. In the material world, only that person is known to be successful who is fully dedicated in his work and does not waste his time in mere amusement and play.

This is the fundamental reality towards which the Holy Qur'an has over and over again diverted our attention and has despised those who completely ignore

this reality and choose to make their lives a means of amusement and fun.

Verses of the Holy Qur'an regarding amusement and play:

(١) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

1. And from amongst the people are those who purchase idle talks (i.e. music, singing etc.) in order to mislead (people) from the path of Allah without knowledge and take it (the path of Allah) by way of mockery. For such there will be a humiliating torment (in the Hell-Fire). (Luqman:6)

(٢) فَذَرَهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يَوعَدُونَ

2. So leave them to plunge in vain talk and play about, until they meet their day which they are promised. (Al-Ma'arij:42)

(٣) وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

3. And if you ask them (the hypocrites about their hypocrisy), they will say, "We were only talking idly and joking." Say, "Was it about Allah, His 'ayaat (signs, verses, lessons) and His Messenger tht you were mocking. (At-Taubah: 65)

(٤) قُلِ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

4. Say, "Allah (sent it down)." Then leave them to play in their vain discussions. (al-An'am:91)

(٥) أَوْ أَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

5. Or, did the people of the towns then feel

secure against the coming of our punishment in the forenoon while they were playing. (al-A'raaf:91)

(٦) مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ مُّحَدَّثٍ إِلَّا اسْتَمَعُوهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ لَاهِيَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ

6. There comes not unto them an admonition (verses of the Qur'an) from their Lord as a recent revelation except that they listen to it while they play with their hearts distracted (by evil things). (Al-Ambiyaa: 2)

(٧) بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ يَلْعَبُونَ

7. On the contrary, they are playing about in doubt. (Ad-Dukhan : 9)

(٨) فَوَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ

8. Then woe that day to those who are playing in falsehood. (At-Toor : 11-12)

(٩) وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمُ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا

9. And when you proclaim the call towards *salah*, they take it as a mockery and fun. (Al-Ma'idah : 58)

(١٠) قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّاعِبِينَ

10. They said, "Have you brought us the truth or are you one of those who play about? (Al-Ambiyaa: 55)

(١١) وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَذَكِّرْ بِهِ أَن تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ

11. And leave alone those who take their religion as play and amusement and whom the worldly life has deceived, and remind (them) through it (the Holy Qur'an) lest a person be destroyed for what he has earned. (al-An'am: 70)

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(١٢) إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَ لَهُوَ وَ إِن تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا
يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجُورَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ

12. The worldly life is but play and pastime. And if you believe and fear (Allah), He will grant you your rewards and will not ask from you your wealth. (Muhammad : 36)

(١٣) وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَلِلَّذِينَ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ
لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

13. And the worldly life is nothing but play and amusement and the world Hereafter is far much better for those who fear (Allah i.e. are pious). Will you then not understand? (Al-An'aam : 32)

(١٤) وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوَ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ
لَهِىَ الْحَيَاةُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

14. And this worldly life is nothing but amusement and play and verily the world hereafter is the eternal life. Indeed, if they only knew! (Al-Ankaboot : 64)

(١٥) قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِوَ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ
الرَّازِقِينَ

15. Say, "That which Allah has is better than any amusement and business." And Allah is the best of providers. (Al-Jumuah : 11)

A brief summary of the verses

Although most of the aforementioned verses were revealed concerning the non-believers, but by merely studying the translation, we can conclude that the verses contain a common meaning and reality within themselves. And what is this reality? The reality is that the difference between a person who's life is spent

according to its true purpose and a person who is constantly indulged in amusement and fancies is like the difference between the earth and the sky. The former life is the ultimate aim and object of Islam while the latter is contemptible and repugnant to the teachings of Islam. The former is the life of a faithful believer whose sole aim is success in the life hereafter. The Honorable Companions (*Sahabah* ﷺ) and the pious scholars of Islam were its best examples. The latter is the life of the negligent and non-believers who have no true purpose in life and do not have faith in the Hereafter.

Briefly, Islam emphasizes a life to be spent with a true purpose and aim wherein its precious time is utilized in a beneficial manner. Islam persuades the human being to spend his valuable time in such deeds that will definitely benefit him in this life and also in the Hereafter. Otherwise, at least not cause any harm to him. That is why in the Holy Qur'an where the highly moral qualities of Muslims are mentioned, it is also stated:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

And they (i.e. believers) are those who turn away from vain (talk, falsehood etc.).

(Muminoon : 3)

Likewise, where the distinguishing features of those who are most nearest to Allah Almighty are mentioned, it is also stated.

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

And if they (i.e. the most nearest and faithful) pass by falsehood, they pass by it with dignity.

(Furqan : 72)

It is most clear from these verses that the distinctive

feature of an intelligent and ideal Muslim is that he keeps himself far away from absurdity and non-beneficial activities as mentioned in the ahadith reported by Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said:

الكَيِّسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ
اتَّبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَنَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ (رواه الترمذی وابن ماجه كذا في
المشكوة)

The intelligent person is the one who keeps himself under control (i.e. keeps an account of his actions) and strives for the Hereafter. And the foolish person is the one who lets himself follow his carnal desires and (at the same time) has a baseless longing for (the mercy of) Allah.

This same meaning has been interpreted in another hadith as *حسن اسلام* (*husni islam*) i.e. the righteousness and essence of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ has said, as reported by Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad and Imam Malik:

من حسن اسلام المرء تركه مالا يعنيه (رواه الترمذی وابن ماجه وغير
هما كذا في المشكوة)

Abandoning non-beneficial things is included in the beauty and righteousness of a person's Islam.

Since the words used in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith to denote non-beneficial acts are *لهو* (*lahw*), *لعب* (*la'ib*) and *لغو* (*laghw*), it would be appropriate if their literal meanings be explained:

اللهو: ما يشغل الإنسان عما يعنيه ويهمه (كذا في مفردات القرآن
للراغب)

'Lahw' is all those things which make a person negligent of important matters.

اللَّعِبُ: لعب فلان اذا كان فعله غير قاصد به مقصداً
صحيحاً (كذا مفردات القرآن للراغب)

'La'ib' is anything that is done without a correct purpose.

اللَّغْوُ: وهو كل سقط من قول أو فعل فيدخل فيه الغناء
واللهو وغير ذلك مما قاربه (كذا في تفسير القرطبي ٨٠:١٣)

'Laghw' is every useless talk or act in which music and everything which distracts a person from important matters is included.

The permissibility of enjoyment in Islam

Until now, all the Qur'anic verses and ahadith that have been mentioned, contain one meaning i.e. we have been ordered to safeguard our time, spend our lives in the most beneficial manner by striving to fulfill the purpose we've been created for and abstain from 'lahw', 'laib' and 'laghw' i.e. all useless activities.

However, this does not mean that amusement or enjoyment is totally prohibited. Amusement or enjoyment is not totally forbidden. What we mean by amusement or enjoyment is to cheer oneself up, relax the body and refreshen the mind. This is not only permissible in Islam, but is recommended to an extent in order to remove laziness and boredom from oneself and provide agility, alertness, encouragement and ambition so that one can focus himself towards fulfilling his purpose of life with utmost aspiration and alertness. But, most importantly it is necessary that this sort of enjoyment is in reality enjoyment within the boundaries laid down by the 'Shariah' and does not fall within the category of 'lahw', 'laib' or 'laghw'.

The famous commentator of the Holy Qur'an, Allamah Qurtubi رحمه الله عليه has written:

والفرح لذة في القلب بادراك المحبوب (تفسير القرطبي ٥٤)

Enjoyment is a particular pleasure felt in the heart at the acquirement of anything favourable.

When this enjoyment reaches the state of self-conceit and arrogance, it becomes prohibited as stated in the Holy Qur'an:

لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ

Do not be conceited as Allah does not like those who are self-conceited.

If this enjoyment does not reach the state of self-conceit and arrogance but is merely a pleasure of the heart and happiness based on gratitude for the bounties of Almighty Allah bestowed upon him, then it is commendable as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا

Say, "With the bounty of Allah and His mercy, with this they should enjoy".

In another place while praising the people of Jannat it is mentioned:

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا تَاهَمُ اللَّهُ فَضْلُهُ

They are enjoying what Allah has bestowed upon them of his bounty.

Such enjoyment behind which there lies a beneficial cause is proven from the lives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Companions رضي الله عنهم. The Holy Prophet ﷺ did not only permit such enjoyment, but actually declared it

to be a means of attaining reward from Allah The Most Exalted because of the beneficial cause behind it. Where we find the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ filled with constant effort and striving in the worship and remembrance of Allah The Most High, teaching and propagating the teachings of Islam, participating in Jihad and managing the socio-economic and internal and external affairs of the state, there we will also find from time to time glimpses of playing and enjoyment which will be explained in detail later on.

Agility and alertness are desirable in Islam

The reason why purposeful enjoyment has been permitted in Islam is obvious. Islam disapproves of laziness and indolence and emphasizes agility and alertness. As a matter of fact, Islam is a natural religion and Allah The Most High has sent down commandments in accordance to the nature of human-beings. Therefore, the Shari'ah stresses that the commands of Allah The Most Exalted be acted upon with full ambition and whole-heartedness instead of dullness and unwillingness.

The disapproval of laziness and boredom and the approval of agility and alertness can be proven from the following verses of the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

(١) وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

1. And He (Allah) has not burdened you in religion with any hardship. (al-Anbiyah: 78)

(٢) يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

2. Allah wants easiness for you and does not want difficulty for you. (al-Baqarah : 185)

(٣) عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت مرّ رسول الله ﷺ بالذين يدوكون بالمدينة فقام عليهم وكنت انظر فيما بين اذنيه وهو يقول 'خذوا يا بني ارفدة حتى تعلم اليهود و النصارى أن في ديننا فسحة' (كذا في كثرالعمال نقلا عن الديلمي ٢٣٣:١٥ رقم ٤٠٦٧٦)

3. Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها narrates that the Prophet ﷺ passed by some people who were playing in Madinah, so he stopped and stood by them and I was looking at them from between the two ears of the Prophet ﷺ while he was telling them, "Carry on playing O Banu Arfida! Let the Jews and Christians know that there is broadness in our religion."

And according to some other narrations the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to them:

(٤) الهوا والعبوا فأني أكره أن يرى دينكم غلظة (وذكره السيوطي في الجامع الصغير ناقلا عن السنن الكبرى للبيهقي كذا في الفيض القدير شرح الجامع الصغير للمناوي ٢: ١٦١)

4. Keep on playing and enjoying yourselves, for I hate that harshness and severity be seen in your religion.

(٥) عن عائشة رضي الله عنها ان ابا بكر رضي الله عنه دخل عليها وعندها جاريتان تضربان بدفين فانتهرهما ابوبكر رضي الله عنه فقال له النبي ﷺ دعهن فان لكل قوم عيذا رواه احمد في مسنده ٣٣:٦ وايضا فيه عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت قال رسول الله ﷺ يومئذ لتعلم اليهود ان في ديننا فسحة اني ارسلت بحنييفية سمحة ١١٦:٦

5. Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها narrates that Sayyidna Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه came to her while

some girls were playing around by her. Sayyidna Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه started to reprimand them, so the Prophet ﷺ said, "Leave them! For indeed there is an Eid (day of happiness and joy) for every nation."

In another similar narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said on that day,

"Let the Jews know that there is broadness in our religion."

6. In one Hadith, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said:

روحوا القلوب ساعة فساعة (وذكره السيوطي في الجامع الصغير وراه ابو داود مراسيله عن ابن شهاب مرسل كذا في فيض القدير ٤: ٤١)

Refreshen your heart from time to time.

In one narration, it is stated:

القلب يمل كما تمل الابدان فاطلبوا لها طرائق الحكمة كذا في كف الرعا عن محرمات الله والسماع لابن حجر الهيتمي ١٥٢

The heart gets bored and tired out just like the bodies bore and tire out. So seek ways of wisdom for them.

7. In Aadabul-Mureedeen written by Shaikh Saharwardy رحمه الله عليه, there's a narration:

(٨) عن علي رضي الله عنه انه قال كان النبي ﷺ يسر الرجل من اصحابه اذراه مغموما بالمداعبة كذا في المرقاة شرح المشكوة لعلی القاری ٢٦٨:١

وفيه قال النووي في شرح المسلم وان الانسان اذا راى صاحبه مغموما حزينا يستحب ان يحدثه بما يضحكه او يشغله او يطب نفسه

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Sayyidna Ali عليه السلام narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to make a person happy when he would see him gloomy and sad. Imam Nawwawi رحمه الله عليه has written in his commentary on the Sahih Muslim that it is desirable that when a person sees someone sad and depressed that he should say something that would make him laugh, avert his attention or make him feel good.

(٩) عن رجل من اصحاب النبي ﷺ قال كنا في مجلس فطلع علينا رسول الله ﷺ وعلى راسه اثر ماء فقلنا يا رسول الله نراك طيب النفس قال اجل قال ثم خاض القوم في ذكر الغنى فقال رسول الله ﷺ لا بأس بالغنى و طيب النفس من النعيم (رواه احمد كذا في المشكوة باب استحباب المال والعمر اللطاعة)

One Sahabi عليه السلام reports that we were sitting in a gathering when the Prophet ﷺ came with wetness apparent on his auspicious hair. We asked, "O Prophet of Allah! We are seeing you very happy". The Prophet ﷺ replied, "Yes!" The narrator quotes that the people then started talking about being wealthy (whether it's good or not), so the Prophet ﷺ said, "There is nothing wrong in being wealthy for those who fear Allah the Most High, but sound health is better for a God-fearing person than wealth and happiness and cheerfulness is one of the special bounties of Allah.

(١٠) عن ابي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ المؤمن القوى خير و احب الى الله من المؤمن الضعيف وفي كل خير و احرص على ما ينفعك واستعن بالله ولا تعجز الخ رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة باب التوكل والصبر

A strong believer is better and more liked by Allah than the weak one and in both there is

good (therefore), covet (i.e. be eager) for those things which benefit you and seek help from Allah and don't be idle.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to make the following dua:

(١١) عن زيد بن ارقم رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ يقول اللهم اني اعوذ بك من العجز والكسل والجبن والبخل والهرم الخ رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة الاستعاذة

Sayyidna Zaid ibn Arqam عليه السلام narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to make this dua: O Allah I seek your protection from idleness, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, weakness etc.

These narrations indicate that cheerfulness, agility and vigour are desirable and dullness, harshness and laziness are undesirable from the Islamic point of view. Therefore, the Shari'ah (Islamic code of law) has permitted suitable games and amusement within suitable limits which will be explained further on.

Desirable Activities in the light of Ahadith

In the famous books of Hadith; Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Musnad Imam Ahmad, Sahih Ibn Khuzaima etc. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ has been reported saying:

كل شئ يلهو به الرجل باطل إلا رميه بقوسه وتاديه فرسه وملا عبته امرأته فأنهن من الحق (كذا في المشكوة باب اعداد آلة الجهاد)

Every game a person plays is futile except for archery, training one's horse and playing with one's wife because these are from righteousness (i.e. purposeful and beneficial).

This narration has been reported with the following words in Kanzul-Ummal:

ما من شيء تحضره الملائكة منا للهو الا ثلاثة الرجل مع امراته واجراء الخيل والنضال - (كنز العمال ٤١٤:١٥) وقال رواه الحاكم في السكنى عن ابى ايوب

There is no such game where upon the Angels of mercy descend except for three types of games: playing with one's wife, riding horses and archery.

In another narration reported in Kanzul Ummal and Al-Jamius Saghir, a fourth sport is also mentioned.

كل شيء ليس من ذكر الله لهو ولعب الا ان يكون اربعة ملاعبة الرجل امراته وتاديب الرجل فرسه ومشى الرجل بين الغرضين وتعليم الرجل السابحة (كنز العمال ٢١١:١٥) والجامع الصغير مع فيض القدير (٢٣:٥)

Anything which is not included in the remembrance of Allah is 'lahw' and 'laib' (i.e. useless and futile) except for four things. Playing with one's wife, training one's horses, walking between two targets (while aiming arrows i.e. practising archery) and (learning) and teaching how to swim.

The activities narrated in the above-mentioned Ahadith have been reported in other narrations as well, but with more detail and emphasis. Other amusements have also been mentioned. Therefore, it seems quite appropriate that the Ahadith and narrations pertaining to each of the desirable activities and amusements be summarized as well.

1. Archery

Archery is a desirable sport in Islam. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has mentioned many virtues concerning

archery and declared learning it as a means of attaining reward from Allah The Most High, because it creates agility and alertness in the body, strengthens the muscles and enhances the eyesight. At the same time it is very beneficial in jihad and protecting oneself in times of need. Muslims have actually been ordered in the Holy Qur'an:

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ (سورة الانفال: ٦٠)

And prepare for (war against) them all the power you can achieve.

In the famous compilation of *hadith*, Sahih Muslim, the word قوة (power) mentioned in the above verse has been interpreted as throwing. The Prophet ﷺ announced three times:

ألا ان القوة الرمي رواه مسلم كذا فى المشكوة

Behold! Indeed (the meaning of) power is throwing.

Just as according to the time of the Prophet ﷺ and the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم, throwing was meant to denote the throwing of arrows. Similarly nowadays, shooting bullets, firing rockets, launching missiles, dropping bombs and the use of all other modern-day technological weapons are also included in throwing and just as training oneself for the use of these weapons is a very good form of exercise, it also is a means of obtaining reward from Almighty Allah.

In one Hadith it is stated:

ان الله يدخل بالسهم الواحد ثلاثة نفر الجنة صانعه يحتسب فى صنعته الخير والرمى به ومنبله وارموا واركبوا وان ترموا احب الى من ان تركبوا (رواه الترمذى وابن ماجه) وزاد ابوداود

والدارمى ومن ترك الرمي بعد ما علمه رغبة عنه فانه نعمة
تركها او قال كفرها كذا في المشكوة رقم ٣٨٦٢ باب اعداد آلة الجهاد
والبيهقي ٢١١١:١٠

Verily Allah The Most High admits three types of persons into Jannah because of one arrow. One is the maker of the arrow if he has the intention of attaining reward, second is the thrower and third is the one who hands over the arrow (to another person to throw). And O' People! Learn archery and practise horse-riding but I'd rather like you to learn archery than horse-riding. Whoever quits archery contemptuously after learning it, is ungrateful (to the bounty of Allah bestowed upon him).

In another Hadith, the following words are stated:

من علم الرمي ثم تركه فليس منا رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة
Whoever quits archery after learning it, is not from among us.

In another narration the following words are reported:

من علم الرمي ثم تركه فقد عصا رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة رقم
الحديث ٦٨٦٣

Whoever learnt the art of archery then quit it has committed a sin.

In a hadith reported in Sahih Muslim, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

ستفتح عليكم الروم ويكفيكم الله فلا يعجز احدكم ان
يلهوا باسهمه رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة رقم ٣٨٦٢ باب اعداد آلة
الجهاد

In the near future Rome will be conquered by

you and Almighty Allah will be sufficient for you (from the enemies), but still none of you should become idle from practising archery.

It becomes quite clear from the above-mentioned Ahadith that archery or any other kind of target-shooting practice is a desirable sport in Islam. We have been commanded to learn it and after learning, keep on practising it, and forgetting it has been condemned and prohibited.

However, it should be kept in mind that target-shooting should be purposeful. In other words, such target-shooting should be practised which would be beneficial for jihad or would provide physical exercise. Otherwise, target-shooting without any benefit like sling-shooting pebbles has been prohibited as can be seen from the following Hadith:

عن عبد الله بن مغفل رضى الله عنه انه رأى رجلاً يخذف
فقال لا تخذف فان رسول الله ﷺ نهى عن الخذف وقال
ان لا يصاد به صيد ولا ينكأ به عدو ولكنها قد تكسر السن
وتفقأ العين رواه البخاري و مسلم كذا في المشكوة رقم ٣٥١٦ باب ما لا
يضمن من الحمايات.

Sayyidna Abdullah ibn Mughaffal رضي الله عنه saw a person slinging pebbles and told him not to do so, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ had forbidden it by saying "Any prey cannot be caught by such means, neither is an enemy injured, but you may sometimes break a tooth or injure an eye."

On this same basis, purpose-less sling-shooting (i.e. shooting pebbles with a forked-shaped stick with an elastic strung between the two ends (often called a sling-

والدارمى ومن ترك الرمى بعد ما علمه رغبة عنه فانه نعمة تركها او قال كفرها كذا فى المشكوة رقم ٣٨٦٢ باب اعداد آلة الجهاد

والبيهقى ٢١١١:١٠

Verily Allah The Most High admits three types of persons into Jannah because of one arrow. One is the maker of the arrow if he has the intention of attaining reward, second is the thrower and third is the one who hands over the arrow (to another person to throw). And O' People! Learn archery and practise horse-riding but I'd rather like you to learn archery than horse-riding. Whoever quits archery contemptuously after learning it, is ungrateful (to the bounty of Allah bestowed upon him).

In another Hadith, the following words are stated:

من علم الرمى ثم تركه فليس منا رواه مسلم كذا فى المشكوة

Whoever quits archery after learning it, is not from among us.

In another narration the following words are reported:

من علم الرمى ثم تركه فقد عصا رواه مسلم كذا فى المشكوة رقم

الحديث ٦٨٦٣

Whoever learnt the art of archery then quit it has committed a sin.

In a hadith reported in Sahih Muslim, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

ستفتح عليكم الروم ويكفيكم الله فلا يعجز احدكم ان

يلهوا باسهمه رواه مسلم كذا فى المشكوة رقم ٣٨٦٢ باب اعداد آلة

الجهاد

In the near future Rome will be conquered by

you and Almighty Allah will be sufficient for you (from the enemies), but still none of you should become idle from practising archery.

It becomes quite clear from the above-mentioned Ahadith that archery or any other kind of target-shooting practice is a desirable sport in Islam. We have been commanded to learn it and after learning, keep on practising it, and forgetting it has been condemned and prohibited.

However, it should be kept in mind that target-shooting should be purposeful. In other words, such target-shooting should be practised which would be beneficial for jihad or would provide physical exercise. Otherwise, target-shooting without any benefit like sling-shooting pebbles has been prohibited as can be seen from the following Hadith:

عن عبدالله بن مغفل رضى الله عنه انه رأى رجلاً يخذف

فقال لا تخذف فان رسول الله ﷺ نهى عن الخذف وقال

ان لا يصاد به صيد ولا ينكأ به عدو ولكنها قد تكسر السن

وتفقأ العين رواه البخارى و مسلم كذا فى المشكوة رقم ٣٥١٦ باب ما لا

يضمن من الجنایات۔

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On this same basis, purpose-less sling-shooting (i.e. shooting pebbles with a forked-shaped stick with an elastic strung between the two ends (often called a sling-

shot or catapult) has been disliked as it has no useful purpose. In the compilation of Hadith; Kanzul-Ummal, a narration has been reported with the following words:

عن حكيم بن عباد حنيف قال اول منكر ظهر بالمدينة حين فاصت الدنيا وانتهى سمن الناس طيران الحمام والرمى في الجلاهق فاستعمل عليها عثمان رضى الله عنه رجلا من بنى ليث يقصها ويكسر الجلاهق كذا العمال كتاب اليهود واللعب من قسم الافعال رقم ٤٠٦٧٥ برمز ابن عساكر

When wealth became abundant and obesity overcame the people, the first evil that appeared in Madinah was pigeon-flying and sling-shooting. It was the time of Sayyidna Uthman رضي الله عنه. He appointed a person from the tribe of Abu Lais as the governor of Madinah whose job was to cut the wings of pigeons and break sling-shots.

Anyway, purposeful target-shooting which will benefit in jihad is a desirable sport in Islam. Hunting with rifles can also fulfil this purpose under the condition that it is done within the limits of 'Shari'ah' (Islamic code of law).

2. Horse-Riding

Since Horse-riding is very beneficial for jihad, it is desirable in Islam. This sport is such that as well as providing full exercise to the body, it creates desirable qualities such as skill, bravery, courage and high ambitions within a person and also comes in use for jihad excursions and travelling. In spite of the fact that in the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith, horses have been commonly mentioned as a means of transportation, nevertheless all those vehicles are meant that come in use for jihad. It is

stated in the Holy Qur'an:

واعدوا لهم ما استطعتم من قوة ومن رباط الخيل ترهبون به عدو الله وعدوكم واخلين من دونهم لا تعلمونهم الله يعلمهم (سورة الانفال : ٦٠)

And prepare for (war against) them (i.e. the non-believers) whatever strength (i.e. weapons etc.) and stock of trained horses is possible in your faculty in order to over-awe and terrify your enemies and the enemies of Allah and others apart from them whom you do not know (but) Allah knows them.

In the commentary of this verse, Mufti Muhammad Shafi رحمه الله عليه has written:

From amongst the necessary equipment required for jihad, horses have been specifically mentioned because in those days horses were the most beneficial and effective means of conquering nations and even today there are many places which cannot be conquered without them (Tafsir Ma'ariful-Qur'an, 4:272)

Rearing and training horses and horse-riding practice with the intention of fulfilling the important purpose they serve in jihad, carries enormous rewards as mentioned in the following hadith:

من احتبس فرساً في سبيل الله وتصديقاً بوعده فان شعبه وريه وروثه وبوله في ميزانه يوم القيامة (رواه البخارى كذا في المشكوة باب اعداد آلة الجهاد رقم ٣٨٦٨)

Whoever reared a horse for use in the path of Allah with full faith and affirmation to His

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Whoever reared a horse for use in the path of Allah with full faith and affirmation to His

promises, then all the fodder and water the horse will fill its stomach with and even the manure and urine will be weighed (alongwith his other good deeds) on the Day of Judgment.

In the following Hadith reported by Muslim through different transmissions, three different types of horses have been mentioned:

الخيل ثلاثة فهي لرجل اجر و لرجل ستر و لرجل وزر فاما التي هي له اجر فالرجل يتخذها في سبيل الله ويعدها له فلا تغيب شيئاً في بطونها الا كتب الله له اجرا ولو رعاها في مرج ما اكلت من شيء الا كتب الله له بها اجرا ولو سقاها من نهر كان له بكل قطرة تغيبها في بطونها اجر حتى ذكر الاجر في ابوالها وارواثها ولو استنت شرفا او شرفين كتب له بكل خطوة تخطوها واما الذي هي له ستر فالرجل يتخذها تكريماً وتحملاً ولا ينسى حق ظهورها وبطونها في عسرها ويسرها واما الذي هي عليه وزر فالذي يتخذها اشراً وبطراً وبذخاً ورياء الناس فذاك الذي يتخذها اشراً وبطراً وبذخاً ورياء الناس فذاك الذي هي عليه وزر (كذافي الصحيح لمسلم باب اثم مانع الزكوة رقم ٢١٦٣)

Horses are of three types: They are a source of reward for a person, a source of protection, or a source of destruction. As for the horses which bring reward for their owner; they are those which a person rears and trains for the path of Allah. Nothing disappears in their stomachs but Allah would record for him a good deed. And if they were to graze in a meadow, then for everything they would eat, Allah would

record for him a reward. And if they were to drink from a river, then with every drop that disappears in their stomachs, there would be a reward recorded for him. The Prophet ﷺ carried on describing the various rewards until a reward was mentioned even for their manure and urine. And if they galloped over a hill or two, there would be a reward recorded for every pace they covered. As for the horses which are a source of protection for their owner; they are the ones which the owner rears for honour and to display the bounty of Allah bestowed upon him, but does not forget the rights of their backs and stomachs (i.e. looks after them properly) in the times of plenty and adversity. As regards for those horses which are a source of destruction; they are the ones a person rears for glory, pomp, showing off and arrogance. These are a burden and source of destruction for their owner.

Another narration which is very appropriate to mention here is:

من خير معاش الناس لهم رجل ممسك عنان فرسه في سبيل الله يطير على منته كلما سمع هيعة او فرعة طار عليه يبتغي القتل والموت مظانه الخ (رواه مسلم كذافي المشكوة كتاب الجهاد)

One of the best types of sustenance is that of a person who grasps his horse's reins in the path of Allah and races on its back, seeking those places where martyrdom is likely to occur whenever he hears a terrible shout or cry for help...

Many other narrations can be found on the

importance of horse-riding in the compilations of Hadith. From reading them, one can conclude that rearing and training horses for the sake of Jihad carries limitless amounts of reward and that the Prophet ﷺ also knew the different species and qualities of horses.

In the above-mentioned Ahadith, although virtues have been stated specifically concerning horses only, but according to the principle of Islamic Jurisprudence; similarity of a use leads to similarity of the ruling, meaning that if identical causes are found in two different matters, the rulings will also be identical in both matters, these same ahadith may be applied to all those vehicles which come in use for jihad and the same virtues may be achieved by learning how to use them. For example: Jet fighters, helicopters, submarines, battle-ships, tanks, jeeps, cars, motorcycles, bicycles, etc. Therefore, training in these vehicles and learning how to operate them would also be included in those activities approved by Shari'ah and desired in Islam provided that they are used for beneficial and permissible causes.

3. Swimming

Swimming is an excellent means of physical exercise which has been mentioned in ahadith. Whereas it strengthens the body muscles, it also comes in use for saving the lives of people and is very essential for jihad training because crossing rivers and streams during wars is most common. In the modern-day wars, security checkpoints at sea-shores play a very important and fundamental role from the defensive point of view. This is why the narration reported in al-Jami'us Saghir and Kanzul Ummal which was just shortly mentioned, stated that swimming whether learning or teaching it carries

enormous rewards.

There is another narration in al-Jami'us Saghir and Kanzul Ummal stating:

خير لهو المؤمن السباحة وخير لهو المرأة المغزل (وذكره ابن

عدي في الكامل عن ابن عباس كذا في كنز العمال ٢١١:١٥)

The best activity of the believer is swimming and the best activity for women is knitting.

Competition in swimming has also been reported from the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم as stated in Awariful-Ma'arif of Shaikh Saharwardy رحمه الله عليه :

وروى عبد الله ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال قال لي عمر

تعال انافسك في الماء اينا اطول نفسا (عوارف المعارف ١٤٢

للشيخ السهروردي)

Sayyidna Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه narrates that Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه said to me, "Come on! Let's see which one of us can hold his breath the longest under water!"

4. Jogging

A light jog or a short run is one of the best types of exercise for the body as all physicians and fitness experts are unanimous on its benefits. In the previously mentioned narration of Al-Jami'us Saghir, jogging or racing has been listed as one of the desirable activities in Islam. The reason is obvious that it removes laziness and idleness which is disapproved of in Islam. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has sought protection from laziness and idleness in his supplications as is clear from the narrations of Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih al-Muslim in which the following dua' (supplication) is narrated:

اللهم انى اعوذبك من العجز والكسل والجبن والبخل
والهرم- متفق عليه كذا فى المشكوة باب الاستعاذة-

O Allah! I seek your protection from idleness,
laziness, cowardice, miserliness, weakness etc.

Other than removing laziness, jogging strengthens the muscles of the body, invigorates its organs helps prepare for jihad and keeps a person active for worshipping Almighty Allah and serving people. It also breaks the pretended self-esteem of a person and creates cheerfulness and large-heartedness within him. That is why the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم never used to hesitate in doing such beneficial activities as can be seen from the following ahadith:

عن قتاده رضى الله عنه قال سئل ابن عمر رضى الله عنهما
هل كان اصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
يضحكون قال نعم والايمان فى قلوبهم اعظم من الجبل
وقال بلال بن سعد رحمه الله ادرکتهم يشتدون بين
الاغراض ويضحك بعضهم الى بعض فاذا كان الليل كانوا
رهبانا رواه البيهقي فى شرح السنة كذا فى المشكوة باب الضحك رقم الحديث-

Sayyidna Qatadah رضي الله عنه reports that Sayyidna Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه was asked, "Did the Sahabah ever used to laugh?" Sayyidna Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه replied, "Yes, but their Imaan was stronger than mountains." Bilal ibn S'ad says that I've seen the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم run between targets and joke and laugh amongst each other. However, at night, they would be God-fearing worshippers.

وعن سلمة بن الاكوع رضى الله عنه قال بينا نحن نسير و

كان رجل من الانصار لا يسبق شدا فجعل يقول الا سابق
الى المدينة ! هل من مسابق؟ فقال ما تكرم كريما ولا
تهاب شريفا؟ قال: لا الا ان يكون رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال :
قلت: يا رسول الله بابى انت وامى ذرنى فلاسابق الرجل
قال: ان شئت قال فسبته الى المدينة رواه احمد و مسلم كذا فى

احكام القرآن ١٩:٣-

Sayyidna Salamah Ibn Al-Akwa' رضي الله عنه says that while we were walking, one Sahabi from the Ansar who had never lost a race, started saying, "Is there anyone who will race me to Madinah? Is there anyone who dares to race me?" (Sayyidna Salama Ibn al-Akwa' says) I told him, "Don't you have respect for any noble person?" He replied, "No, I don't, except for the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم." (Sayyidna Salama ibn Al-Akwa' says) I requested the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم "May my parents be sacrificed for you, permit me to have a race with him." The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied, "If you wish, go ahead." Sayyidna Salama Ibn Al-Akwa' narrates that I had a race with him till Madinah and beat him.

وعن ابن عمر رضى الله عنهما ان عمر سابق الزبير فسبقه
الزبير فقال سبقتك ورب الكعبة ثم ان عمر سابقه مرة
اخرى فسبقه عمر رضى الله عنه فقال عمر سبقتك ورب
الكعبة- رواه الحاملى كذا فى كنز العمال ٢٢٤:١٥

Sayyidna Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه narrates, that Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه had a race with Sayyidna Zubair رضي الله عنه and Sayyidna Zubair رضي الله عنه beat him and exclaimed, "By the Lord of Ka'bah, I beat you!" Then Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه had another race with him and this time Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه beat him and exclaimed, "I won! By the Lord of Ka'bah".

5. Enjoyment and play between Husband and Wife

Among the afore-mentioned Ahadith, it has been reported that playing with one's wife is not only permissible, but a means of obtaining reward from Almighty Allah. The 'Shari'ah' (Islamic code of life) has provided us with very explicit and clear guidelines concerning the different stages and aspects of marital-life including sexual relations, about which many volumes may be written. The aim of this chapter is not to give a deep and detailed account of the different aspects of married-life, but only to narrate those ahadith from which a very important aspect of marital life becomes manifest i.e. joking and laughing, playing and jesting with each other, deriving pleasure and gratification from one another etc.

1. The following verse of the Holy Qur'an and narrations clearly emphasize the importance of legitimate sexual-relations between husband and wife from the Islamic perspective because pleasure and satisfaction derived from legitimate sexual relations save both the husband and wife from adultery and illegitimate inclination towards others and most of all, it is a means of providing the energy and effort needed to accomplish the pre-eminent goals and most dominant purposes of this world and the Hereafter. When a Muslim husband and wife play with each other in order to amuse themselves, derive pleasure and satisfaction from each other and fulfil the rights of conjugal relations with the intention of giving birth to pious offspring and safe-guarding one another from illicit relations and inclinations, then this playing, instead of being an act of ordinary animal nature,

becomes Haqq (truth, righteousness), Sadaqah (charity) and Ibadah (worship) which reaps boundless rewards for both husband and wife. It is stated in the Holy Qur'an:

ومن آياته ان خلق لكم من انفسكم ازواجًا لتسكنوا اليها
وجعل بينكم مودة ورحمة ان في ذلك لآيات لقوم
يتفكرون۔ سورة الروم: ٢١

And among His signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find satisfaction in them and has created between you love and mercy. Verily, in this are great signs indeed for those people who ponder.

The former Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Shaikh Muhammad Shafi' رحمه الله عليه has written in his famous urdu commentary of the Holy Qur'an under this verse:

They (i.e. your wives) have been created so that you may acquire peace and gratification by going to them. If you ponder over the necessities of men in relations with women, the result in all cases will be the same i.e. peace of mind, contentment of the heart, comfort and mutual gratification. Allah The Most High has not only kept statutory rights between husband and wife, but has created love and affection for each other firmly inside them. (See, Tafsir Ma'ariful Qur'an Urdu vol.6, p. 736)

Hakimul - Ummat Allamah Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله عليه has stated in one of his speeches:

In short, women have been created so that you may acquire peace of mind, contentment of the heart, relief from tiredness and distress, amusement and pleasure. So women are for pleasuring oneself, not for cooking. As for the verse that states, 'love and mercy have been created between you'; I say that youth is the

time for love and affection to reach its height as ardour and passion within both husband and wife are at its peak during this time and old-age is the time for mercy and sympathy for each other. (see Huququz Zawjain p. 551)

2. We have just shortly quoted a hadith narrated in the famous books of hadith; Tirmizhi, Ibn Majah, Musnad Ahmad etc. which mentions:

كل شيء يلهو به الرجل باطل الا رمية بقوسه وتاديبه فرسه وملا عيته امراته فانهن من الحق-

Every game a person plays is futile and worthless except for archery, training one's horse and playing with one's wife as these are from Haq (righteousness).

3. In almost all the famous books of Hadith, the incident of Sayyidna Jabir رضي الله عنه has been mentioned as follows:

قلت يا رسول الله ﷺ اني حديث عهد بعرس قال تزوجت قلت نعم قال ابكر ام ثيب قلت بل ثيب قال فهلا بكرأ تلاعبها وتلاعبك الخ كذا في المشكوة

(Sayyidna Jabir رضي الله عنه narrates), I said, "O Prophet of Allah! I have just recently married." The Prophet ﷺ asked, "Did you marry a virgin or a widow?" I replied, "A widow." The Prophet ﷺ then inquired, "Why didn't you marry a virgin so that you may play with her and she with you?"

4. There is a narration in Kanzul Ummal on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Saeed Khudri رضي الله عنه as follows:

ان الرجل اذا نظر الى امراته ونظرت اليه نظر الله تعالى اليهما نظرة رحمة فاذا اخذ بكفها تساقطت ذنوبهما من

خلال اصابعهما - كذا في كنز العمال ٢٧٦:١٦^١

When a husband casts a glance at his wife and the wife at him, Allah Almighty looks at them with mercy and sympathy. And when the husband holds his wife's hand with affection, both of their sins start falling off from between their fingers.

5. In the same compilation, there's a narration:

ان الله ليعجب من مداعبة الرجل زوجته ويكتب لهما بذلك اجرا ويجعل لهما بذلك رزقاً حلالاً كذا في كنز العمال

رامزا الى كامل ابن عدي وابن لال عن ابي هريرة ٢٧١:١٦

Indeed Allah Almighty loves to see a person play with his wife and because of it, ordains for them a great reward and provides for them halal (lawful) sustenance.

6. In the famous compilation of Hadith, Mishkat al-Masabih, there is a narration:

عن سعد بن ابي وقاص رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عجب للمؤمن ان اصابه خير حمد الله وشكر وان اصابته مصيبة حمد الله وصبر فالمؤمن يوجر في كل امره حتى في اللقمة يرفعها الى في امراته رواه البيهقي في شعب الايمان كذا في المشكوة

Very amazing it is indeed for the Mu'min (believer). If good and prosperity reaches him, he praises Allah Almighty and thanks Him and, if a calamity befalls him, he praises Allah Almighty and observes patience. A Mu'min is rewarded under all circumstances to such an

(١) ذكره السيوطي في الجامع الصغير ورمز الى كون الحديث صحيحاً قال المناوي في شرحه: رواه ميسرة بن علي في مشيخته المشهورة والواهي امام الدين عبدالكريم القرويني في تاريخه الى تاريخ قروين ٣٣٣:٢٠ كذا في فيض القدير شرح الجامع الصغير

extent that he is even rewarded for that morsel which he raises to his wife's mouth (to feed).

7. In the same compilation, it is reported:

عن ابي ذر رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ان بكل تسبيحة صدقة وكل تكبيرة صدقة وكل تحميدة صدقة وكل تهليلة صدقة وامر بالمعروف صدقة ونهى عن المنكر صدقة وفي بضع احدكم صدقة قالوا يا رسول الله اياتى احدنا شهوته ويكون له فيها اجر قال ارايتم لو وضعها في حرام اكان عليه فيه وزرذ كذلك اذا وضعها في الحلال كان له اجر رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة

On every tasbeeh i.e. saying Subhanallah, is a reward of giving in charity, on every tahmeed i.e. saying Al-hamdulillah is a reward of giving charity, on every takbeer i.e. saying Allahu Akbar, there is a reward of charity, inviting towards good deeds is charity, forbidding from evil deeds is charity and even having sexual intercourse with one's wife is charity. The Sahabah رضي الله عنهم astonishingly inquired, "O Messenger of Allah! Can one of us be rewarded even if he fulfills his sexual passion?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "What do you think would happen if he fulfils it in an unlawful manner; will he not be punished? Likewise, when he fulfils it in a lawful manner, he will surely be rewarded."

8. In another narration reported by Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim it is stated:

عن عائشة رضى الله عنها قالت والله لقد رايت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقوم على باب حجرتي والحبشة يلعبون بالحرايب في المسجد ورسول الله يسترنى بردائه لانظر الى لعبهم بين

اذنيه وعاتقه ثم يقوم من اجلى حتى اكون انا التي انصرف فاقدروا قدر الجارية الحديثة السن الحريصة على اللهو متفق عليه كذا في المشكوة

Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها says, "By Allah, I have seen the Prophet ﷺ standing by the door of my room hiding me with his blanket, while the Abyssinians were playing with spears, so that I may watch their play from behind, glancing from in between his ears and shoulders. And just for my sake, he stood there until I was the one who moved from there. Just imagine how long a young girl who is fond of playing would have stood there.

9. The Prophet ﷺ had a race with his wife Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها two times as narrated:

عن عائشة رضى الله عنها انها كانت مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في سفر قالت فسابقته فسبقته على رجلى فلما حملت اللحم سابقته فسبقني قال هذا بتلك السبقة رواه ابو داود كذا في المشكوة

Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها narrates that she was with the Prophet ﷺ on one journey. She says, "I had a race with the Prophet ﷺ and beat him. (After a while on another journey) when I had become a bit plump, I had another race with him, but this time he beat me and said, "We're even now."

Note: It should be borne in mind that both races occurred while travelling when the caravan had moved further on with the order of the Prophet ﷺ and there was no other person there. Therefore, those people cannot use this Hadith as evidence who are seen jogging or strolling publicly along the streets or in parks with their wives

amidst strangers without observing hijab i.e. covering of the body. (However, a person may take his wife for a jog or a walk without observing hijab in a remote and non-residential area where there is no possibility of anyone seeing them as is the case in the Hadith. [Translator]

10. Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ narrated a story of eleven wives and their husbands to Aishah رضي الله عنها just for the sake of amusing her. Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim both have narrated this incident in their compilations which is known as 'Hadith Ummi Zar'.

11. In Kanzul-Ummal it is reported from Sayyidna Umar Ibn Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه on the authority of Ibrahim Taymi رحمه الله عليه :

ينبغي للرجل ان يكون في اهله مثل الصبي فاذا التمس
ما عنده وجد رجلاً كذا في كثر العمال رامزا الى ابن ابي الدنيا والدينوري
والمصنف لعبد الرزاق ٥٧٣:١٦

A person should be like a child while with his family, but when an important matter comes up, he should be a man.

From the above-mentioned ahadith, we can see what importance and value Islam has given to the preservation of mutual love and affection between husband and wife and the maintenance of correct relations between each other. While these ahadith convey a severe warning for those who leave their wives at home and ignite the fire of Hell for themselves by unlawfully glancing at other women in the parks and markets and indulging in extra-marital relations, at the same time they provide advice for those who tend to adopt baseless modesty even

in their lawful marital relations and purposely spoil the enjoyment of marriage with their own hands.

However, it is a settled and definite matter that this deeply affectionate relationship between husband and wife should never become a means of neglecting the commandments of Allah Almighty and the rights of the creation, and this permissible and reward-bearing enjoyment should be treated only as an enjoyment. It should not become the purpose of life and most of all become an obstacle in the way of life's most important purposes and obligations such as five-times Salah, Fasting, Haj, Propagation of Din, Jihad etc. because steadfastness on the straight path without falling prey to either ends of extremity is the key to success for a believer.

وما توفيقنا الا بالله العلي العظيم

And we cannot do it except with the will of Allah the Most High and Grandeur.

Note: At this stage two more points should be kept in mind to save oneself from going to either ends of extremity concerning marital relations:

1. First of all, love and kind treatment does not mean obedience. Therefore, to love one's wife does not mean to start obeying her in every matter, because the Prophet ﷺ has forbidden this explicitly in many Ahadith:

لن يفلح قوم ولوا امورهم امرأة رواه البخارى كذا في المشكوة
That nation will never succeed who makes a woman their leader.

واموركم الى نسائكم فبطن الارض خير لكم من ظهرها رواه
الترمذي كذا في المشكوة

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الترمذي كذا في المشكوة

And (when) your important matters are entrusted to your women, then the inside of the earth will be better for you than the top of it.

هلكت الرجال حين اطاعت النساء كذا في الجامع الصغير

Men will be destroyed when they start obeying their wives (in all important matters).

عن عمر رضى الله عنه خالفوا النساء فان في خلافهن البركة رواه العسكرى كما قال المناوى في فيض القدير شرح الجامع الصغير

٣٥٦:٦

Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه narrates, "Oppose your wives because there's blessings in opposing them."

عن معاوية رضى الله عنها عودوا النساء 'لا' فانها ضعيفة وان اطعتها اهلكتك. رواه العسكرى كما قاله المناوى في فيض القدير

٣٥٦:٦

Make your wives habituated to accepting 'no' (i.e. any answer in the negative) as they are weak. If you obey them, they will destroy you.

Contrarily, women have been ordered to obey their husbands as much as possible in every permissible matter, even though they don't comprehend the reason behind it.

ولو امرها ان تنقل من جبل اصفر الى جبل اسود ومن جبل اسود الى جبل ابيض كان ينبغي لها ان تفعل رواه احمد كذا في

المشكوة

If the husband orders his wife to transfer rocks from a yellow mountain to a black one and from a black mountain to a white one, it would be incumbent on her to do so.

Secondly, apart from playing and deriving pleasure from one's wife, there are many other rights of the wife upon the husband which must also be fulfilled. Some of them have been mentioned in the Hadith wherein the Prophet ﷺ gave ten pieces of advice to Sayyidna Mu'az Ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه which are:

وانفق على عيالك من طولك ولا ترفع عنهم عصاك ادبا
واخفهم في الله رواه احمد كذا في المشكوة

And spend on your family according to your capacity, and keep a stick within your reach to teach them morality and etiquettes and keep on frightening them in respect to fulfilling the commandments of Allah Almighty.

6. Righteous Poetry

Listening to or reciting poems with good and beneficial meanings for the sake of amusement during one's leisure time is also proven from many ahadith:

عن عمرو بن الشريد رضى الله عنه عن ابيه قال ردت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوماً فقال هل معك من شعر امية بن ابي الصلت شئ قلت نعم قال هبه فانشدته بيتاً فقال هبه ثم انشدته بيتاً فقال هبه حتى انشدته مائة بيت رواه مسلم كذا في المشكوة

Sayyidna Amr رضي الله عنه narrates from his father Sayyidna Shareed رضي الله عنه that he said, "One day while I was riding on the same mount behind the Prophet ﷺ, he asked me whether I knew any of Ummayya Ibn Abi Salt's poetry. I replied that I did, so he asked me to recite some. I recited a couplet and he ordered me to carry on, so I recited another couplet. He ordered me again to carry on, till I had recited

And (when) your important matters are entrusted to your women, then the inside of the earth will be better for you than the top of it.

هلكت الرجال حين اطاعت النساء كذا في الجامع الصغير

Men will be destroyed when they start obeying their wives (in all important matters).

عن عمر رضى الله عنه خالفوا النساء فان في خلافهن

البركة رواه العسكرى كما قال المناوى في فيض القدير شرح الجامع الصغير

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Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه narrates, "Oppose your wives because there's blessings in opposing them."

عن معاوية رضى الله عنها عودوا النساء 'لا' فانها ضعيفة

وان اطعتها اهلكتك رواه العسكرى كما قاله المناوى في فيض القدير

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ولو امرها ان تنقل من جبل اصفر الى جبل اسود ومن جبل

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عن عمرو بن الشريد رضى الله عنه عن ابيه قال ردت

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوماً فقال هل معك من

شعر امية بن ابي الصلت شئ قلت نعم قال هيه فانشدته

بيتاً فقال هيه ثم انشدته بيتاً فقال هيه حتى انشدته مائة بيت

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a hundred couplets.

عن البراء بن عازب رضى الله عنه قال كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ينقل التراب يوم الخندق حتى اغبر بطنه يقول:

والله لولا الله ما هتدينا ولا تصدقنا ولا صلينا
فانزلن سكينه علينا وثبت الاقدام ان لاقينا
ان الاولى قد بغواء علينا اذا ارادوا فتنه ابينا

يرفع بها صوته ابينا ابينا رواه البخارى ومسلم كذا فى الشكوة

Sayyidna Bara' Ibn Azib رضي الله عنه narrates that on the day of the battle of Al-Khandaq (the Trench), the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was transferring earth (from one place to another) to such an extent that his auspicious belly became concealed with earth and at the same time the following couplets were on his auspicious tongue:

I swear by Allah, were it not for Allah, we would not have been guided

Nor would we have given charity, nor have prayed. So send down tranquility upon us,

And keep us steadfast if we encounter the enemy. They (i.e. the enemy) are the ones who have attacked us. When they try to inflict us with tribulations (i.e. turn us away from Islam), we refuse!

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would raise his voice while exclaiming,

"We refuse! We refuse!"

عن خوات بن جبير قال خرجنا حجاجا مع عمر بن الخطاب رضى الله عنه فسرنا فى ركب فيهم ابو عبيدة بن

الجراح وعبدالرحمن ابن عوف رضى الله عنهما فقال القوم غننا ياخوات فغنناهم فقال غننا من شعر ضرار فقال عمر: دعوا ابا عبد الله يتغنى من هنيات فؤاده (يعنى من شعره) فما زلت اغنيهم حتى اذا كان السحر فقال عمر ارفع لسانك ياخوات فقد اسحرنا كذا فى كترالعمال ٢٢٨:١٥ والسنن

الكبرى للبيهقى ٢٢٤:١٠

Khawwat Ibn Jubair narrates that we were once travelling with Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه in one caravan on the way to perform Haj. Sayyidna Abu Ubaidah and Sayyidna Abdur Rahman bin Auf رضي الله عنه were also with us. On the way, some people requested me to melodiously recite some poetry, so I melodiously recited some poetry. Then some people requested that I recite the poetry of the poet Dhirar. On that, Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه said, "Let Khawwat recite his own poetry." Therefore, I melodiously recited to them all night until at the break of dawn, Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه said, "That's enough! It's almost morning."

عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما انه كان اذا اكثر الكلام فى القرآن والسنن قال لمن عنده احمضوا بنا اى غوصوا فى الشعر والايخبار كذا فى كف الرعاى ملخصا على هامش الزواجر: ١٦٤
كما فى احكام القرآن للمفتى محمد شفيع رحمه الله ١٩٥:٣

It has been reported from Sayyidna Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه that when he lectured on the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith for long hours, he would tell those around him, "Let's change taste." Then they would start reciting poetry and talk about the news to refreshen themselves.

ابن جريج قال سالت عطاء عن الغناء بالشعر فقال لا ارى به باسا مالم يكن فحشا كذا فى السنن الكبرى ٢٢٥:١٠

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Ibn Juraij رحمه الله عليه narrates that I asked Ata رحمه الله عليه about melodiously reciting poetry. Ata رحمه الله عليه answered, "I don't see any harm in it as long as it does not contain any sort of obscenity.

It is written in the famous Fatawa Alamigiri that:

ومنهم من قال يجوز التغنى لدفع الوحشة اذا كان وحده
ولا يكون على سبيل اللهو واليه مال شمس الائمة
السرخسي وانشاد ماهو مباح من الاشعار لا باس به كذا في

فتاوى العالمكيرية ٣٥١:٥

Some Jurists say that it is permissible to recite poetry in a melodious tone in order to remove fright when alone provided that it is not done recklessly (i.e. with background music, dancing etc.). Allama Sarakhsi رحمه الله عليه has also preferred this opinion. And, there is no harm in reciting righteous poetry.

From the above-mentioned *ahadith*, it is quite clear that to recite righteous poetry in a melodious tone during one's free time or while travelling to amuse oneself is permissible from the Shari'ah point of view. In addition, there is even scope from the Islamic perspective to take a trip for the sake of refreshing oneself as stated by the former Grand Mufti of Pakistan Shaikh Muhammad Shafi رحمه الله عليه in one of his writings. (see Rafeeq-e-Safar)

The Islamic Ruling on Activities Apart From Those Specifically Mentioned in Ahadith

These were some activities and sports which have been specifically mentioned in ahadith and narrations. There is no doubt in the permissibility of the above-mentioned activities as long as the limits of Shari'ah are

not transgressed. But, what is the Islamic ruling for those activities, sports, games etc. which are not specifically mentioned in the Ahadith? After a thorough research of the Holy Qur'an, Ahadith and Islamic Jurisprudence, the following points may be deduced:

1. Those games which have been explicitly prohibited in the Ahadith, for example, chess, backgammon pigeon-flying, animal-fighting etc. Such games are not permissible.

2. Those games which comprise of any sin or non-permissible act. Such games are also not permissible due to the sin involved in it e.g. such sports in which the 'sitr' i.e. those parts of the body which have to be covered, is revealed, those games which involve gambling, music, free-mixing between men and women, those games which resemble a specific custom of the non-believers etc.

3. Those games or sports which make a person negligent of Salah and other compulsory duties. Such activities are also not permissible because all those things which make a person neglectful of salah and other compulsory duties is included in '*lahw*' لَهْو and therefore not permissible.

Imam Bukhari رحمه الله عليه in his compilation of hadith has named a chapter under the heading:

كل لهو باطل اذا شغله عن طاعة الله

Every game is falsehood i.e. useless if it distracts a person from the obedience of Allah.

The famous and most authentic commentator of Sahih al-Bukhari, Hafiz Ibn Hajar رحمه الله عليه has written regarding this heading:

Ibn Juraij رحمه الله عليه narrates that I asked Ata رحمه الله عليه about melodiously reciting poetry. Ata رحمه الله عليه answered, "I don't see any harm in it as long as it does not contain any sort of obscenity.

It is written in the famous Fatawa Alamigiri that:

ومنهم من قال يجوز التغنى لدفع الوحشة اذا كان وحده
ولا يكون على سبيل اللهو واليه مال شمس الائمة
السرخسي وانشاد ماهو مباح من الاشعار لا باس به كذا في

فتاوى العالمكيرية ٣٥١:٥

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The famous and most authentic commentator of Sahih al-Bukhari, Hafiz Ibn Hajar رحمه الله عليه has written regarding this heading:

اي كمن التهي بشيء من الاشياء مطلقاً سواء كان مأذوناً
في فعله او منهيّاً عنه كمن اشتغل بصلاة نافلة او بتلاوة
او ذكر او تفكير في معاني القرآن مثلاً حتى خرج وقت
الصلاة المفروضة عمداً فانه يدخل تحت هذا الضابط واذا
كان هذا في الاشياء المرغوب فيها المطلوب فعلها فكيف
حال مادونها كذا في فتح الباري ١١:٩١

Anyone who indulges in any activity whether it be permissible or not, for example, a person who deliberately occupies himself with 'nafl' (optional) prayers, recitation of the Holy Qur'an, remembrance of Allah, pondering over the meanings of the Holy Qur'an etc. to such an extent that an obligatory prayer is missed, is also included in this ruling i.e. in this case such optional forms of 'ibadah' (worship) also fall under the category of *lahw* (uselessness) because they have caused distraction from an obligatory prayer. Therefore, if this is the ruling for 'nafl' (optional) forms of 'ibadah' (worship) about which many virtues have been reported in *ahadith* and are recommended by the 'Shari'ah', then what will the ruling be regarding those activities which are even lower in rank than 'nafl ibadah' (optional worship)? i.e. such permissible activities that cause distraction from the obedience of Allah Almighty, would then be ever much more impermissible.

4. Those games which have no purpose or benefit and are played just to pass time. Such games are also not permissible as they are '*laghw*' (لغو) and indulging in them is wasting one's precious moments of his temporary and very short life.

The Holy Qur'an states while mentioning the high, distinctive, moral qualities of the believers:

والذين هم عن اللغو معرضون (سورة المؤمنون: ٣)

And (the believers) are those who turn away from vain (talk, falsehood etc.)

However, any activity, amusement, sport or game which does not comprise of any of the above four points is permissible according to Shari'ah as can be concluded from the sayings of the Great Islamic Jurists and Commentators of Hadith which will be presented in the following chapter.

Some Passages from the Books of Famous Jurists and Commentators of Hadith.

As mentioned earlier, Imam Bukhari in his compilation of Hadith has enacted a chapter under the heading of:

كل لهو باطل اذا شغله عن طاعة الله

Every game is falsehood (useless) if it distracts one from the obedience of Allah.

The famous comentator of Sahih al-Bukhari, Hafiz Ibn Hajar while commenting on this chapter has written:

واول هذا الترجمة لفظ حديث اخرجه احمد والاربعة وصححه ابن خزيمة والحاكم من حديث عقبة بن عامر رفعه كل ما يلهو به المرء المسلم باطل الارمية بقوسه وتاديه فرسه وملا عبته اهله الحديث وكأنه لما لم يكن على شرط المصنف استعمله لفظ ترجمة واستنبط من المعنى ما قيد به الحكم المذكور وانما اطلق على الرمي انه

لهو لامالة الرغبات الى تعليمه لما فيه من صورة اللهو لكن المقصود من تعلمه الاعانة على الجهاد و تاديب القوس اشارة الى المسابقة عليها وملاعبته الاهل التانيس وغيره وانما اطلق على ما عداها البطلان من طريق المقابلة لا ان جميعها من الباطل المحرم كذا في فتح الباري ٩١:١١

And the beginning part of this heading (i.e. meaning every play is falsehood) is the words of a hadith transmitted by Imam Ahmad, Imam Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Dawood, Imam Nasa'i, Imam Ibn Majah and has been authenticized by Ibn Khuzaimah and Hakim, all reporting on the authority of Sayyidna Uqbah Ibn Amir رضي الله عنه narrating from the Prophet of Allah ﷺ that he said, "All games of a believer are falsehood (i.e. useless) except for archery, training his horse and playing with his wife."

However, assumingly since this hadith did not match the condition of authenticity according to Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه, he instead, used it for the above heading and extracted the pre-condition (i.e. if it distracts one from the obedience of Allah) from the meaning of the hadith with which the above ruling (i.e. every game is falsehood) has been restricted to. And archery has been termed as '*lahw*' (useless activity) because it apparently resembles it, but the purpose of learning it is preparation for Jihad. Similarly training horses implies riding and racing on them and the purpose of playing with one's wife is to create mutual affection etc. Games other than those mentioned in the *hadith* have been termed as '*batil*' (falsehood) only as way of comparison (i.e. they do not comprise of any valid purpose while those mentioned in the *hadith* are purposeful and beneficial), not because all types of games are

falsehood. (i.e. all purposeful and beneficial games other than those mentioned in the *hadith* are also exempted from being termed as '*batil*' i.e. falsehood).

In short, according to Imam Bukhari رحمة الله عليه, all sorts of purposeful and beneficial games are permissible if they do not distract one from the obedience of Allah Almighty in any manner.

While commenting on the previously mentioned *hadith*:

كل شيء يلهو به الرجل باطل الا رميه بقوسه وتاديبه فرسه وملاعبته امراته فانهن من الحق

Mulla Ali Qari رحمة الله عليه writes in his commentary on Mishkat al-Masabih regarding this *hadith*:

وفي معناها كل ما يعين على الحق من العلم والعمل اذا كان من الامور المباحة كالمسابقة بالرجل والخيول والابل والتمشية للتنزه على قصد تقوية البدن وتطرية الدماغ - مرقاة المفاتيح شرح مشكوة المصابيح ٣١٨:٧

And in the same category (of the activities mentioned in the *hadith*) are all those activities which are beneficial and agilitate towards learning and practising upon one's knowledge and fulfilling the commandments of Allah Almighty provided that they are permissible. For example running, horse-riding, camel-riding, walking etc. to strengthen the body or merely for the sake of refreshing the mind.

Allamah Ibnul Arabi Al-Maliki رحمة الله عليه has written in his commentary on Sunan At-Tirmidhi:

هذا بقوته يدل على ان كل ما يعود بمنفعة او تدريب في

مقاتلة العدو مثله كاللعب بالحرايب والدرك والمسابقة على الاقدام كما فعل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم مع عائشة كذا في عارضة الاحوذى بشرح صحيح الترمذى ابن العربى المالكي ١٣٧:٧

This hadith with its strength indicates that all those activities which comprise of promising benefits or provide practice for jihad-training against enemies are also included in the same category of the activities mentioned in the hadith e.g. spear-throwing, shielding, or racing as the Holy Prophet ﷺ did with Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها.

Allamah Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri رحمه الله عليه writes in his commentary on Sunan Abu Dawud:

ولم يكن في زمان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في الحرب الا رمى السهام فيدخل بل يعوض عنه فيه ما يرمى به من الرصاص بالبندقية والمدافع وغير ذلك من الات الحرب الجديدة المستعملة في هذا الزمان فانها اغنت عن رمى السهام بالقوس وعطلته كذا في بذل المجهود في حل ابي داود -٤٢٨:١١

In the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the main weapon used in battles was the bow and arrow (which is specifically mentioned in the hadith). But, nowadays, all those weapons of the latest technology used in the modern day wars, e.g. machine guns, tanks etc. will substitute bows and arrows.

Allama Nawwawi رحمه الله عليه has written in his commentary of Sahih al-Muslim:

وفيه وفي الاحاديث بعده فضيلة الرمي والمناضلة والاعتناء بذلك بنية الجهاد في سبيل الله تعالى وكذلك المشاقفة

وسائر انواع استعمال السلاح وكذلك المسابقة بالخيل وغيرها كما سبق في بابيه والمراد بهذا كله التمرن على القتال والتدرب والتحذق فيه ورياضة الاعضاء بذلك - كذا في الشرح الكامل للنووي في باب فضيلة الرمي-

In this hadith and the *ahadith* following it, the importance and virtues of archery and paying special attention towards learning it with the intention of participating in Jihad for the sake of Allah Almighty have been emphasized. Likewise is the ruling for spear-throwing and learning how to handle all types of weaponry, artillery practice, horse-racing etc. The purpose of (the permissibility of) all these activities is to train oneself for jihad, practise and acquire skill in the use of all types of weaponry needed for jihad, exercise the body etc.

In the famous commentary of Sunan Abu Dawud, Allamah Khattabi رحمه الله عليه writes:

قلت: وفي هذا بيان ان جميع انواع اللهو محظورة وانما استثنى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هذه الخلال من جملة ما حرم منها لان كل واحدة منها اذا تأملتها وجدتها معينة على الحق او ذريعة اليه ويدخل في معناها ما كان من المشاقفة بالسلاح والشد على الاقدام ونحوهما مما يرتاض به الانسان فيتوفح بذلك بدنه ويتقوى به على مجالدة العدو فاما سائر ما يتلهى به البطالون من انواع اللهو كالنرد والشطرنج والمزاجلة بالحمام وسائر ضروب اللعب مما لا يستعان به في حق ولا يستجمل به لدرك واجب فمحظور كله - ٢٠٩:٢ معالم السنن للخطابي-

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activities (other than those mentioned in the hadith) are prohibited and the Prophet ﷺ has only permitted those specific activities mentioned in the hadith because, if we carefully study and ponder over them, we will find that they are either helpful and beneficial for Haq (truth, righteousness) or a means of reaching it (i.e. Haq). Therefore, all those activities which provide physical exercise and maintenance for a healthy body in order to combat enemies will fall under the same category of those mentioned in the *hadith*.

As for those games and activities which loafers and the good-for-nothing type of people play such as chess, backgammon, pigeon-flying and other purposeless games; they are impermissible because they do not assist in any good deed nor do they provide any refreshment or agility to fulfil any Islamic obligation.

The former Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Shaikh Muhammad Shafi رحمه الله عليه has written in Ahkamul Qur'an after giving a brief account of the ahadith narrated concerning this matter:

ولهذا لم يذهب احد من العلماء سلفا و خلفا الى جواز اللهو على اطلاقه فعلى هذا لم يبق في روايات الحديث الا ما يمنع اللهو مطلقا وما يبيح بعضها ويمنع باقيةا، واذا امعنت النظر في الملاهي المستثناة المباحة وجدتها انها ليست باللهو حقيقة وانما سميت لهوا لمحض المشاكلة كما مر من حديث عقبة بن عامر رضى الله عنه عند اصحاب السنن قوله عليه السلام ليس من اللهو ثلاث الحديث كيف واللهو هو الاشتغال بما لا يعنى وما ليس له غرض ومقصد صحيح؟ وهذه المستثناة المباحة انما

ابيحت لاغراض وفوائد لا تحصل الا بامثالها ولهذا صرح الفقهاء ان الملاهي المباحة ايضا انما تباح اذا اشتغل بها لتلك الاغراض والفوائد لا اذا قصد بها التلهي فقط فانها ايضا لا تجوز بقصد التلهي والتلعب فمن اشتغل في المصارعة والسباحة والمسابقة والرماية وامثالها من اللهو المباح بمحض قصد التلهي كان مكروها كذا في احكام

القران ١٩٢/٣ -

None of the preceeding or modern-day Jurists have absolutely permitted games and play. The ahadith narrated concerning this matter, either absolutely prohibit games and play or permit some of them and prohibit the rest. If a careful and deep study is taken on the activities which have been excluded from the absolute prohibition and made permissible, we will discover that these excluded activities in reality, cannot be categorized under 'لهو' (*lahw*: activities without a correct purpose). They have been termed as 'لهو' (*lahw*), only because of their apparent resemblance to it, as may be deduced from the hadith narrated by Sayyidna Uqbah Ibn Amir ؓ that archery, training horses and playing with one's wife is not included in 'lahw' (لهو). If (*lahw*) means indulging in something without a correct purpose, then how can these activities be categorized as لهو (*lahw*) if they carry such benefits and correct purposes that cannot be achieved without indulging in them. For this reason, the Jurists have made this clarification that these permissible activities will only retain their permissibility as long as they have a correct purpose underlying them. Otherwise, if the purpose is mere amusement and play, then even these permissible activities will become impermissible. Therefore, if a person

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ابحت لاغراض وفوائد لا تحصل الا بامثالها ولهذا صرح الفقهاء ان الملهى المباحة ايضا انما تباح اذا اشتغل بها لتلك الاغراض والفوائد لا اذا قصد بها التلهى فقط فانها ايضا لا تجوز بقصد التلهى والتلعب فمن اشتغل في المصارعة والسباحة والمسابقة والرماية وامثالها من اللهو المباح بمحض قصد التلهى كان مكروها كذا في احكام

القران ١٩٢/٣ -

None of the preceeding or modern-day Jurists have absolutely permitted games and play. The ahadith narrated concerning this matter, either absolutely prohibit games and play or permit some of them and prohibit the rest. If a careful and deep study is taken on the activities which have been excluded from the absolute prohibition and made permissible, we will discover that these excluded activities in reality, cannot be categorized under 'لهو' (*lahw*: activities without a correct purpose). They have been termed as 'لهو' (*lahw*), only because of their apparent resemblance to it, as may be deduced from the hadith narrated by Sayyidna Uqbah Ibn Amir ؓ that archery, training horses and playing with one's wife is not included in 'lahw' (لهو). If (*lahw*) means indulging in something without a correct purpose, then how can these activities be categorized as لهو (*lahw*) if they carry such benefits and correct purposes that cannot be achieved without indulging in them. For this reason, the Jurists have made this clarification that these permissible activities will only retain their permissibility as long as they have a correct purpose underlying them. Otherwise, if the purpose is mere amusement and play, then even these permissible activities will become impermissible. Therefore, if a person

practises archery, swims or jogs with the mere intention of amusement and play, then this will also be impermissible and abominable.

The same author has commented on this same issue in his famous urdu commentary of the Holy Qur'an with the following words:

"From the above explanation, it becomes clear that contemptible and undesirable activities are those games and passtime hobbies which have no worldly benefit nor are they useful for the Hereafter. However, those activities, games, sports etc. which provide physical exercise, improve the health or carry any other worldly benefit or assist in matters concerning the Hereafter or at least remove mental boredom and physical tiredness, subject to the condition that they are played with moderation and indulgence in them does not reach such extremes that they become the purpose and aim and start causing harm in necessary matters concerning one's socio-economic life and the life hereafter, then such activities and sports are not only permissible according to 'Shariah', but if played to fulfil religious necessities e.g. jihad etc., they will become a means of attaining reward from Almighty Allah."

Then after quoting a few examples of permissible games of amusement, the learned commentator carries on:

It is stated in one narration:

روحوا القلوب ساعة فساعة اخرجوه ابو داود في مراسيله عن ابن شهاب مرسلا

Keep on refreshing your hearts from time to time.

This explicitly indicates the permissibility for taking some time out to refreshen one's heart and mind. But, the condition is that the intention should be to achieve those beneficial purposes which lie behind them. The purpose should not be just to have fun and enjoy oneself. Moreover, these permissible games should be played only as is necessary and sufficient to achieve their underlying beneficial purposes and refreshen oneself. Excessive indulgence and such extremity which cause harm to both wordly affairs e.g. education, domestic duties, socio-economic affairs etc. and affairs of the Hereafter e.g. Salah, Fasting and fulfilling other rights of Allah and His servants is not allowed. As a matter of fact, the root cause lying behind the permissibility of amusement and play is that when they are within the limits prescribed by the 'Shariah' (Islamic code of life), they do not remain within the category of 'لَهْو' (*lahw*) which has been prohibited by the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith, but enter the category of Haq (righteousness).

However, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has specifically prohibited some games and pastimes e.g. chess, backgammon etc. even though some benefits may be found in them. If gambling is involved, then it is absolutely *haram* (unlawful), and even without gambling, if played just for fun, it has been prohibited. Imam Muslim رحمه الله عليه has narrated a *hadith* on the authority of Sayyidna Bareeda رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "He who plays backgammon is as though he has dipped his hand in a pig's flesh and blood." Similarly, in another narration those who play chess have been cursed. [رواه العقيلي في الضعفاء كذا في نصب الراية]

Likewise, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has prohibited pigeon-flying. The apparent cause behind this prohibition is that engaging oneself in such most commonly leads to negligence in important matters, both worldly and religious to such an extent that they distract one from obligatory prayers and other commandments of Allah Almighty. (Tafsir Ma'ariful Qur'an vol. 7, p. 23-25)

A Fundamental and Comprehensive Fatwa Concerning Games

The former Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Shaikh Muhammad Shafi' رحمه الله عليه has written a very comprehensive fatwa (Islamic ruling) concerning games in the light of the Holy Qur'an, Ahadith and books of Fiqh (jurisprudence) based on fundamental principles. It would be very appropriate to mention it here:

In the famous compilation of Fatawa, Ad-Durrul Mukhtar, it is stated:

وكره كل لهو لقوله عليه السلام كل لهو المسلم حرام الا ثلاثة ملاعبته اهله وتاديبه فرسه ومناضلته بقوسه - (٣٩٥:٦)

And every useless activity is abominable as is stated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ that every useless activity of a Muslim is impermissible except for three types: playing with one's wife, training one's horse and practising archery. (vol.6, p.395)

In the commentary of Ad-Durrul Mukhtar known as Fatawa Shamiya while explaining the meaning of the above passage, it is stated:

(قوله: وكره كل لهو) اي كل لعب وعيب فالثلاثة بمعنى واحد كما في شرح التاويلات والاطلاق شامل لنفس

الفعل واستماعه كالرقص --- (الى قوله) والمزمار والصنج والبوق فانها كلها مكروهة لانها زى الكفار - (٣٩٥:٦)

All three words; lahw (لهو), la'ib (لعب) and abath (عبث) have the same meaning i.e. any useless activity. And this ruling i.e. all useless activities being impermissible includes the activity itself and also listening to it as in dancing and musical instruments... Also, all those activities are impermissible which resemble a specific custom and practice of the non-believers. (vol.6, p.395)

After a couple of pages it is narrated:

وفي القهستاني عن الملتقط من لعب بالصولجان يريد الفروسية يجوز وعن الجواهر قد جاء الاثر في رخصة المصارعة لتحصيل القدرة على المقاتلة دون التلهي فانه مكروه - (٤٠٢:٦)

It is permissible to play 'Saulajan' (a game similar to Polo) for the sake of acquiring skill and expertise in horse-riding. Narrations have been reported indicating the permissibility of wrestling in order to acquire strength for Jihad not merely for amusement and play as it is abominable in such cases. (vol. 6, p.402)

In Ad-Durrul Mukhtar, it is stated:

والمصارعة ليست ببدعة الا للتلهي فتكره (٤٠٤:٦)

Wrestling is not impermissible except when played just for the fun of it. (vol.6, p. 404)

In its explanation, it is stated in Fatawa Shamiya:

قد منا عن القهستاني في جواز اللعب بالصولجان

وهو الكرة للفروسية وفي جواز المسابقة بالطير عندنا نظر
وكذا في جواز معرفة ما في اليد واللعب بالخاتم فانه لهو
مجرد واما المسابقة بالبقر والسفن والسباحة فظاهر
كلامهم الجواز ورمى البندق والحجر كالرمي بالسهم واما
اشالة الحجر باليد وما بعده فالظاهر انه ان قصد به التمرن
والتقوى على الشجاعة لا باس به۔ (٤٠٤:٦)

We have just narrated the permissibility of 'Saulajan' (a sport similar to Polo). However, bird-racing, similarly guessing what is in the hands and playing with rings are merely games without any useful purpose, hence are impermissible. As for horse races, yacht races, and swimming competitions, they are permissible as is apparent from the sayings of the Jurists. And, target-shooting and throwing rocks (as in shot-put) is analogous to archery, and lifting rocks (as in weight-lifting) if done with the intention of acquiring skill, strength and bravery is permissible. (vol.6, p.404)

From the above-mentioned *ahadith* and passages from the books of Islamic Jurisprudence, the following points can be concluded:

1. Those games which carry no substantial benefit whether worldly or religious, are not permissible and these are the games which are categorized as 'لهو' (*lahw*) and prohibited in the hadith.

2. Those games which do carry substantial benefit, whether worldly or religious are permissible under the condition that no such thing is involved which conflicts with the 'Shariah' (Islamic code of law) and does not resemble any particular custom of the non-believers.

3. Any permissible game in which worldly or religious benefits are intended, but an impermissible act is involved, then that permissible game will also become impermissible e.g. archery and horse-riding if bets are at stake or any game which resembles or is considered to be specific with any nation of the non-believers.

Therefore, it becomes clear that any ball game whether it be cricket or any other sport is in itself permissible because contentment of the heart and physical exercise is achieved from it which is a very important worldly benefit and also a means of religious benefit. But, the most important condition is that no anti-Shariah act or resemblance with a specific custom of the non-believers e.g. resemblance in their particular uniform, fashion, behaviour etc. is involved, nor are the knees left open, nor is there such indulgence that it interferes with the commandments of Allah Almighty e.g. Salah etc. If a person can fulfil these conditions, then it is permissible for him to play cricket, tennis etc. Nowadays, because these conditions are commonly not adhered to, such sports are declared to be impermissible by some scholars. (as in Imdadul Mufteen urdu p. 1001-1002).

A Brief Analysis of Current Games and Sports

From the details mentioned in the previous chapter, it can be concluded whether a particular game or sport is permissible or not. Some grave defects which are very much common amongst games and sports of the current era are as follows:

1. These games are being considered as the main purpose and aim of life. Any game, when instead of being merely a game, becomes the purpose and object of one's

life, is not only disapproved and condemned in the light of Shariah, but also disapproved from the rational point of view.

2. The players along with their supporters and fans engage themselves in these games to such an extent that they are given preference over other much more important matters and duties which eventually leads to social disruption and violation of human rights. (Negligence in matters of education is most common among almost children and surveys have shown a drastic decline in the average grades achieved in schools. (Translator))

3. While playing these games, attention isn't paid to the times of obligatory prayers, Jum'ah prayer, fasts of Ramadan while these are *fardh* (compulsory) on every Muslim.

4. A lot of games and sports are so expensive that only the rich and their children can play them while poor children look on stricken with remorse. Children of middle-class families can barely afford to participate which leads to extravagance and even abuse of wealth.

5. Precious time is mostly wasted in these games. In fact, the amount of time being wasted nowadays should be a matter worthy of consideration and special attention should be focussed towards this ever-prevailing issue by the ministers of social-affairs and politicians at a national level.

6. Players are being made heroes and favourites in such a manner that the youth of the new generation enthusiastically imitate sports-stars, actors and actresses

and choose them to be their role models instead of the illustrious Sahaba, pious predecessors, great scholars, mujahideen, scientists, philosophers etc. This has also become an alarming matter worthy of consideration by the politicians and ministers of education and progress.

7. In most sports, those parts of the body are left uncovered which have been ordained by 'Shariah' to be covered. Men wear shorts which reveal the knees and parts of the thigh even though it is obligatory to cover the parts of the body from beneath the navel to and including the knees,¹ while it is obligatory that the whole body of the woman is covered.

8. Most sports tournaments involve free mixing between men and women, and because they gather just for the sake of amusement and pleasure (without any religious purpose or concern for the hereafter), hooting and booing at each other, hooliganism, disturbance, music, dancing and other indecent acts are not only much too common but have become a part of the sport. For this reason it has become hard for the decent and respected members of the society to attend such tournaments or participate in them.

9. Most games which were only supposed to be for exercise and refreshment, now engender an atmosphere of rivalry and nervous tension and have virtually become battlefields where winning is the only object. Communal and ethnical interests are involved at such a level that eminence, merit and social dominance is being based on winning and losing. Players are mentally and physically

1. This is according to the Hanafi school of thought while according to the other school of thought, the knees may be left uncovered but the thighs must be fully covered. (Translator)

put under such stress and pressure that the games no longer remain a source of exercise and refreshment.

Duaas (supplications) are asked to be made for winning and likewise offerings and vows are made to such an extent that it seems as if the issue of liberating Masjid al-Aqsa or Kashmir is being negotiated. Even governors and presidents of countries give congratulating speeches on winning and condoling speeches on losing. *فيا للعجب* (How astonishing!).

Moreover, it is now becoming ever more common that to watch some games is not advisable for those suffering from blood-pressure and heart problems and that during so and so match such and such amount of viewers and listeners suffered from heart failures.

Now, ponder cold-heartedly over the disastrous results of those very games which were intended to be just for the sake of physical exercise, enjoyment and contentment of the heart when the limits prescribed by Shariah regarding them were not adhered to. *فهل من مدكر* (Is there any intelligent one to pay heed!).

10. Occasionally, bets are made and some times thousands and millions are at stake. Other than the large-scale gambling, bets are made unintentionally on a smaller-scale among neighbours and friends and sometimes even intentionally which consequently leads them to become major sinners as gambling has been strictly prohibited in the Holy Qur'an.

Some Famous Sports of the Current Era

Cricket:

Cricket is one of the most famous and approved sports among the eastern countries. Its expenses are a lot and it is the most time-wasting sport. One test match usually

lasts five days and most of the time it ends in a draw. The main players are the batsman and the bowler (pitcher). The bowler throws the ball while the batsman hits it and tries to achieve as many runs as possible. The rest of the team sit in the pavilion and wait for their turn which often doesn't come. Some players stand all day fielding. After a full day's effort, the bowlers and fielders return to their apartments completely exhausted in such a pitiable condition that they are not capable of managing any important worldly or religious affairs. How this baseless and purposeless fatigue was termed a sport is a mystery yet to be solved.

There are also one-day matches which are mostly played on Fridays, thus the whole blessed day of Friday becomes confined to playing and hooliganism. The match carries on right throughout the Jumu'ah prayer and not only the players, but thousands of spectators miss the Jumu'ah prayer and burden themselves with the punishment of this world and the Hereafter.

¹However, apart from the test and one-day matches, if cricket is played for an hour or two for the sake of refreshing oneself, then apparently there seems to be no harm in it and should be permissible provided that no prayers are missed and no other anti-Shariah act is involved.

Field Hockey, Football (Soccer), Volleyball, Tennis, Badminton, Table-Tennis

These are some sports which need substantially less money to play and are an excellent means of physical exercise. Every player can evenly benefit from them and

1. This paragraph has been added by the translator with the consent of the compiler.

an hour or two of such sports provide a great deal of enjoyment. If the 'sitr' i.e. from beneath the navel to and including the knees¹ are kept covered and all requirements of Shariah are fulfilled while abstaining from the harms and defects mentioned before, then such sports would become very much beneficial for the body and at the same time would be permissible to play from the Islamic perspective.

Some More Commonly Played Sports² **Basketball, Squash, Polo, Cycling, Ice-Skating,** **Roller-Skating, Track and Field**

The Islamic ruling for these sports is the same as above as these are also very beneficial for one's health provided that no anti-Shariah act is involved.

Ice-Hockey

It is not approvable from the Islamic point of view to play Ice-Hockey because of the following points:

- i) It is very aggressive and injurious especially when body-checking is permitted and almost everyday players are being inflicted with minor and major injuries.
- ii) Even if it isn't played with aggression (body checking etc.), there still is a strong possibility of getting injured.
- iii) Extravagance: Hundreds of dollars are required for protective equipment without which the player's lives would be in danger. This is without doubt extravagance and to waste so much money on a game which is only

1. This is according to the Hanafi School of Thought. According to the other three schools of Thought, the knees are not included.

2. This chapter has been added by the translator with the consent of the compiler.

meant to be a means of enjoyment is not at all reasonable, especially when there are other inexpensive games available which fulfil the purpose of enjoyment.

However, floor-hockey that most kids play for the sake of enjoyment, is allowed as it is an excellent means of physical exercise and keeping healthy.

American Football, Rugby

These are also disapprovable sports from the Islamic point of view because:

1) It is very aggressive and injurious. The main object of the game is to tackle and bring down the opponent carrying the ball. Injuries are caused very frequently to the players as is commonly observed.

2) A very high amount is required for protective equipment which leads to extravagance and as mentioned before to spend such high amounts on something which is merely an enjoyment is very unreasonable.

3) Because of its aggressiveness, arguments and fights are very much likely to break out which will consequently break the hearts of Muslims and create enmity between them, and enjoyment which was the main purpose will not be achieved.

However, if instead of playing aggressively with tackling or any other sort of aggressive physical contact, two-hand-touch football is played like kids do nowadays in parks, then there appears to be no reason for its impermissibility as it is also a good source of exercise for the body.

Baseball

There isn't much difference between cricket and baseball. Therefore, the same ruling will apply here. A complete eleven-inning game of baseball is a sheer waste of time. However, if it is played for an hour or two for the sake of enjoyment, then there appears to be no harm in it.

Cock-Fights and Other Types of Animal Fight

In villages, cock and other types of animal-fights are traditionally held and are quite popular. Animals are made to fight each other while the spectators look on with delight. This is not permissible according to Shari'ah. Most often gambling is also involved and obligatory prayers are missed. Moreover, there's music and swearing to top it off. Even if there is no gambling or any other anti-Shariah act, it is still against the order of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who has been sent as a mercy for the universe. In Tirmizi and Abu Dawud, it is stated:

نهى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن التحريش بين
البهائم رواه الترمذى وابو داود كذا فى المشكوة.

The Prophet ﷺ has prohibited from inciting animals to fight each other.

Hakimul-Ummat Allamah Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله عليه has written in his booklet concerning the rights of animals after quoting this hadith that:

Cock-fighting and enticing any other type of animals to fight each other is included in this hadith and all this is *haram* (unlawful) as animals are tormented without any purpose. Similar is the case of oxen-cart racing. The drivers beat the oxen severely and make them run (although it is against their nature to run)

until they start gasping out of breath and sometimes the drivers get hurt as well. There is no purpose behind it except for competition and excelling others in pride and glory.

On the other hand, horse-racing if without gambling is an exception as its purpose is to acquire skill and expertise in horse-riding which is essential for Jihad (and horses are naturally fit to run as well).

Pigeon-Flying:

This has also been prohibited in Ahadith:

عن ابى هريرة رضى الله عنه ان رسول الله ﷺ رأى رجلاً يتبع حمامة فقال شيطان يتبع شيطانة رواه احمد وابو داود ابن ماجه كذا فى المشكوة.

Sayyidna Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet ﷺ saw a person chasing a pigeon. On that, the Prophet ﷺ commented, "A 'shaytan' (satan) chasing another shaytan."

Hakimul Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله عليه has listed the harms of it in one of his books concerning the rectification of customs as follows:

1. Capturing pigeons that belong to others which is oppression and usurpation.
2. There is such indulgence that neither the times of obligatory prayers are paid heed to nor are the rights of others.
3. Climbing on the roofs of houses which causes inconvenience to the residents and disturbs their privacy.
4. Stones are thrown at pigeons which causes trouble and even injury to others. (see Islahur Rusoom urda pg. 16)

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3. Climbing on the roofs of houses which causes inconvenience to the residents and disturbs their privacy.
4. Stones are thrown at pigeons which causes trouble and even injury to others. (see Islahur Rusoom urdu pg. 16)

Because of the above-mentioned harms, the head of the state has a right to slaughter those pigeons which belong to pigeon-flyers. The narration has been mentioned earlier in this booklet that Sayyidna Usman رضي الله عنه did the same during his rule as Khalifa (leader of the state). (See Kanzul Ummal vol.15, p. 222 or page 28 of this book)

However, to keep parrots and other small birds as pets is permissible provided that their cage is big and wide enough, and complete care is taken in providing food, water and whatever is needed to maintain them.

Kite-Flying:

In some places kite-flying is quite popular and is played as a custom in festivals which is called 'Basant'. Thousands of rupees are wasted and hooliganism and rowdyism exceed all bounds.

Hakimul-Ummat Allamah Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمة الله عليه has written the evils and harms of this game in the light of the Holy Qur'an, Ahadith and common-sense out of which some of them are:

1. Running behind kites: Its ruling can be based on the same analogy as of chasing pigeons about which the Prophet ﷺ has declared the chaser as a '*shaytan*' (satan).

2. Snatching and looting the kites of others: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated:

ولا ينتهب نهبة يرفع الناس اليه فيها ابصارهم حين ينتهبها
وهو مؤمن رواه البخاري ومسلم كذا في المشكوة

No one loots in such a manner that people are watching him and he remains a believer (i.e. a

real believer cannot do such a thing).

In this *hadith*, looting has been declared to be against the requirements of Iman.

A person may argue that kites are looted with the permission of the owner, thus the above *hadith* cannot be used as evidence against kite-flying.

The answer to this is that the owner never gives permission to have his kite snatched. It's just become ever so common that the owner cannot disagree or complain and is forced to stay quiet and play along. He is never whole heartedly contented on having his kite snatched away. It is for this reason that after his kite gets snapped, the owner recoils its string as fast as possible in order to regain whatever is left of his string.

3. Snatching and looting the string: This is worst than looting the kite because the kite will fall to one person while the string falls to several people, thus all of them become partners in sin and the kite-flyer alone becomes the means of the rest to become sinners. Therefore, as mentioned in a *hadith*, the kite-flyer alone will be committing a sin equivalent to the sins of others.

4. Intention of incurring damage: Every kite-flyer's intention and aim is to snap kites belonging to others even though incurring damage to others is absolutely unlawful (haram). In this manner the kite-snapper and the one whose kite got snapped both become sinners.

5. Negligence from prayers and the remembrance of Allah: For this very reason liquor and gambling have been forbidden. (See sura Al-Maidah:91)

6. Intrusion of privacy: Kite-flyers climb onto roof-tops which causes great inconvenience to residents of the

neighbourhood and interferes with their hijab (veiling of the faces).

7. Physical injury: Newspaper reports show a drastic increase in injuries caused during kite-flying e.g. by falling off roof-tops etc. Similarly, many traffic accidents have occurred because of kite-flying. Most incidents don't even reach the reporters. To call such an injurious activity a game and means of enjoyment is beyond comprehension. If the Prophet ﷺ has prohibited sleeping on a roof without walls surrounding it as reported in Mishkat, just in case he might, after waking up, start walking and without knowing it fall off the sides and incur physical injury, then why shouldn't such a game be prohibited which actually causes injuries.

8. Financial harm: Millions of rupees are wasted purposelessly on kite-flying. Kites are expensive the way they are, but now lighting systems, loud speakers, dinner invitations etc. have become an inevitable part of the game.

9. Other sins: Apart from the above-mentioned harms, nowadays, firing in the air, yelling on loud speakers, music, free-mixing between men and women have become ever more common. Each one of these things in itself is a sin. Therefore, how can a game which consists of these things be permissible.

Because of the above-mentioned harms, the Jurists have forbidden kite-flying as it is played in the present day and age with snapping other kites, snatching strings etc. to such an extent that even selling or buying kites is impermissible and those who sell kites must too acquire other means of sustenance which accrues lawful income. (as in the register of fatawa Darul-Uloom Karachi, vol. 34-D:1510 and 34-B:807).

Note:

This ruling is only for that type of kite-flying which definitely consists of the above-mentioned harms and is famous in only some places. As for the kites which little kids fly just for the fun of it, without intending to snatch any other kite or cause harm is without doubt permissible as long as any of the above-mentioned harms is not involved and its ruling would be like that of playing with balloons i.e. even though it isn't beneficial, but for little kids there is no harm. And only Allah Almighty knows best.

Indoor Games and Pastimes

Chess:

The Honourable Sahabah رضى الله عنهم اجمعين have explicitly prohibited it and it is obvious that they must have heard it from the Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidna Ali رضى الله عنه used to say:

الشطرنج هو ميسر الاعاجم يولد ليهي في لعب الامم كذا في المشكاة

Chess is the gambling of the non-arabs.

Sayyidna Abu Musa Ash'ari رضى الله عنه says:

لا يلعب بالشطرنج الا عاظم يولد ليهي في لعب الامم كذا في المشكاة

Only the sinners play chess.

He was once asked about chess, so he replied:

هي من الباطل ولا يحب الله الباطل يولد ليهي في لعب الامم كذا في المشكاة

It is falsehood (useless) and Allah does not like falsehood.

In light of the above-mentioned and other similar narrations, Imam Abu Hanifah رحمه الله عليه and other Jurists have prohibited it.

neighbourhood and interferes with their *hijab* (veiling of the faces).

7. Physical injury: Newspaper reports show a drastic increase in injuries caused during kite-flying e.g. by falling off roof-tops etc. Similarly, many traffic accidents have occurred because of kite-flying. Most incidents don't even reach the reporters. To call such an injurious activity a game and means of enjoyment is beyond comprehension. If the Prophet ﷺ has prohibited sleeping on a roof without walls surrounding it as reported in Mishkat, just in case he might, after waking up, start walking and without knowing it fall off the sides and incur physical injury, then why shouldn't such a game be prohibited which actually causes injuries.

8. Financial harm: Millions of rupees are wasted purposelessly on kite-flying. Kites are expensive the way they are, but now lighting systems, loud speakers, dinner invitations etc. have become an inevitable part of the game.

9. Other sins: Apart from the above-mentioned harms, nowadays, firing in the air, yelling on loud speakers, music, free-mixing between men and women have become ever more common. Each one of these things in itself is a sin. Therefore, how can a game which consists of these things be permissible.

Because of the above-mentioned harms, the Jurists have forbidden kite-flying as it is played in the present day and age with snapping other kites, snatching strings etc. to such an extent that even selling or buying kites is impermissible and those who sell kites must too acquire other means of sustenance which accrues lawful income. (as in the register of fatawa Darul-Uloom Karachi, vol. 34- D:1510 and 34-B :807).

Note:

This ruling is only for that type of kite-flying which definitely consists of the above-mentioned harms and is famous in only some places. As for the kites which little kids fly just for the fun of it, without intending to snatch any other kite or cause harm is without doubt permissible as long as any of the above-mentioned harms is not involved and its ruling would be like that of playing with balloons i.e. even though it isn't beneficial, but for little kids there is no harm. And only Allah Almighty knows best.

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Backgammon:

The Prophet ﷺ has strictly forbidden the playing of backgammon in Ahadith. Some are as follows:

عن بريدة ان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال من لعب
بالنردشير فكانما صبغ يده في لحم خنزير ودمه رواه مسلم كذا
في المشكوة

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whosoever plays backgammon is as if he dipped his hands in the blood and flesh of a pig.

In another narration it is stated:

عن ابي موسى الاشعري رضى الله عنه ان رسول الله ﷺ
قال من لعب بالنرد فقد عصي الله ورسوله رواه احمد وابوداؤد
كذا في المشكوة

Whoever plays backgammon, has disobeyed Allah and His Messenger.

Poker Cards

The Jurists have prohibited poker for the following reasons:

- 1) There are pictures on the cards.
- 2) Usually gambling is involved.
- 3) It is the passtime and hobby of the transgressors and non-believers.
- 4) There is usually excessive indulgence in it.
- 5) Instead of enjoyment, there is mental fatigue.
- 6) There is no beneficial purpose behind it.

Educational Card Games:

Such card games which involve the creating of words through different letters written on cards are beneficial

for educational purposes and usually do not involve gambling. Therefore, if there isn't excessive indulgence, they are permissible as there is no harm in playing with them.

Carom Board

There seems to be no factors of impermissibility in this game itself, but excessive indulgence in it is prohibited as it leads to negligence towards obligatory duties. However if it is played for a while to remove mental and physical fatigue without committing any anti-Shariah act, it would be permissible. (as in Kifayatul-Mufti)

Ludo

The ruling of Ludo would apparently be the same as Carom-Board provided that no anti-Shariah act is committed and the game-board does not have pictures on it.

Video-Games

Those video games which do not contain pictures of animated objects, but only consist of non-animated objects such as space ships, aeroplanes, cars, helicopters, battleships etc. as in Space Invaders and Pole Position, or contain pictures of animated objects but are so small that they cannot be classified as pictures i.e. the eyes, nose, mouth etc. cannot be seen clearly and only their outline is visible, then there is scope for playing such video games for the sake of refreshing oneself and improving alertness provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- 1) Gambling is not involved.
- 2) Prayers aren't missed.

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- 1) Gambling is not involved.
- 2) Prayers aren't missed.

4) Education and other important day-to-day matters aren't affected.

5) There's no extravagancy.

6) There's no excessive indulgence.

However those video games which contain pictures of animated objects and can be seen clearly are impermissible especially when there is a strong presumption that:

1) The unlawfulness of pictures will diminish from the minds and hearts.

2) Prayers will be missed.

3) Rights of others will not fulfilled and education and other important matters are affected.

4) Extravagancy and excessive indulgence is consequent.

Other than the above-mentioned harms, excessive indulgence in video games increases the mental fatigue instead of refreshing it which consequently leads to negligence in one's education and other important matters.

Some more common Indoor Games¹ **Snooker, Pool, Bowling**

Their appears to be no reason for their impermissibility provided that excessive indulgence and other obligations are not overlooked.

1. This chapter has been added by the translator with the consent of the compiler.

Board Games

Apart from Ludo, nowadays most board games contain pictures of animated objects. Therefore, care should be taken to firstly rub off the faces before playing.

However, those seemingly never-ending board games which carry on for days and weeks such as Monopoly are Islamically disapproved of as they are nothing but a sheer waste of time and cause negligence from necessary obligations and keep the minds distracted.

Wrestling, Karate, Kung-Fu, Boxing, Stick-fighting

To learn these sports for the sake of Jihad and self-defence is permissible and within suitable limits these are a very good source of physical exercise. Extra precaution must be taken while practising that the head and face are not aimed at as it is impermissible to hit in the face.

It is impermissible and haram to learn and practice these sports aggressively, offensively or oppressively in order to cause harm or injury to someone without any valid cause. Similarly, to have fighting bouts with each other merely for the sake of enjoyment without any valid reason is not approvable as there are heavy chances of injuries and heart-breaking.

Weight-Lifting

Moderate weight lifting is also a beneficial means of physical exercise. But, firstly fitness experts and doctors should be consulted, otherwise it may be hazardous.

Some Modern Pastime Hobbies and Amusements

It is also appropriate to mention the ruling of some

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hobbies which are commonly adopted nowadays as a means of enjoyment for the sake of passing time. After these so-called means of enjoyment are analyzed in the light of the Holy Qur'an, Ahadith and common sense, we will be able to see how harmful and injurious they are for one's mind, heart and soul.

Listening to Music

To melodiously recite righteous poems or listen to them for temporary enjoyment of the heart is not only permissible but also reported from the Sahabah and Pious Ulama (may Allah be pleased with them). However, playing such songs which consists of musical instruments or the voice of a woman is haram (absolutely forbidden). As a matter of fact, it is in conflict with the purpose of the Holy Prophet ﷺ being sent to us as mentioned in a Hadith:

عن ابي امامة رضي الله عنه ان رسول الله ﷺ قال ان الله عزوجل بعثني هدى ورحمة للمؤمنين وامرني لمحق المزامير والاولتار والصليب وامر الجاهلية رواه ابو داود الطيالسي واحمد بن حنبل

Sayyidna Abu Umama ؓ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah has sent me as a guidance and mercy for the believers and has ordered me to destroy all musical instruments, the cross and the customs of the days of ignorance."

ليكونن من امتي اقوام يستحلون الحر والحرير والخمر والمعازف الحديث رواه البخارى فى كتاب الاشربة.

There will be such people from among my followers who will try to claim fornication, silk, wine and musical instruments to be lawful (*halal*).

In another hadith it is stated:

الغناء يثبت النفاق فى القلب كما يثبت الماء البقل رواه ابو داود والبيهقى

Music creates hypocrisy in the heart just as water causes plants to grow.

In another Hadith it is stated:

عن نافع ان ابن عمر رضى الله عنهما سمع صوت زمارة راع فوضع اصبعيه فى اذنيه وعدل راحلته عن الطريق وهو يقول يانافع اسمع فاقول نعم فيمضى حتى قلت لا قال فرفع يده وعدل راحلته الطريق وقال رايت رسول الله ﷺ سمع زمارة راع فصنع مثل هذا رواه احمد وابو داود وابن ماجه

Nafi narrates that Sayyidna Ibn Umar ؓ once heard a musical instrument so he blocked his ears with his fingers and moved away from the main road while asking, "O Nafi! Can you still hear it?" I replied, "Yes". He then carried on until I replied, "I can't hear it anymore." He then brought his mount back onto the main road and said, "I was once with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he also heard the sound of music and did the same thing."

The former Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Mufti Muhammad Shafi' رحمه الله عليه has written a very comprehensive thesis concerning music in his arabic exegesis of the Holy Qur'an named Ahkamul Qur'an which has also been translated into urdu. He has dealt with the relevant evidence from the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith, doubts, misconceptions and their answers regarding music. This book should be referred to for more details.

Photography

In Islam, taking pictures of animated objects or drawing them is impermissible and haram. The Messenger ﷺ has prohibited it in many narrations. Some are as follows:

ان اشد الناس عذابا عند الله يوم القيامة المصورون رواه

البخارى فى كتاب اللباس

Surely, on the Day of Judgement, the most tormenting punishment will be given to those who make (animated) pictures.

ان الذين يصنعون هذا الصور يعذبون يوم القيمة يقال لهم

احيوا ما خلقتم رواه البخارى فى كتاب اللباس

Surely, those who make (animated) pictures will be punished on the Day of Judgement. They will be ordered to give life to what they made.

ومن اظلم ممن ذهب يخلق كخلقى فليخلقوا حبة

وليخلقوا ذرة رواه البخارى فى كتاب اللباس

Allah The Most High says, "Who is a greater oppressor than the one who who tries to create like Me. Let him try to create even a seed or an atom."

من صور صورة فى الدنيا كلف يوم القيمة ان ينفخ فيه

الروح وليسى بنافخ رواه البخارى فى كتاب اللباس

Whoever makes an (animated) picture in this world, will be made to bring it to life, and he will not be able to.

سمعت عائشة رضى الله عنها قالت قدم النبى ﷺ من سفر

وقد سترت بقرام لى على سهوة لى فيه تماثيل فلما راه

رسول الله ﷺ هتكه وقال اشد لناس عذابا يوم القيمة

الذين يضاهون بخلق الله قالت فجعلناه وسادة او وسادتين

رواه البخارى فى كتاب اللباس

Sayyida Aisha رضى الله عنها narrates that the Prophet ﷺ once returned from a journey during which I had hung up a curtain with pictures on it. When the Prophet ﷺ saw it, he tore it up and said, "The most severe punishment on the Day of Judgement will be given to those who try to imitate the attribute of creating which is restricted only to Allah Almighty. Sayyida Aisha رضى الله عنها says that we then made one or two pillows out of the curtains.

These are only some *ahadith* concerning the severe consequences of making pictures of animated objects. The Former Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Mufti Muhammad Shafi رحمة الله عليه has compiled a comprehensive booklet in urdu on this subject which entails the relevant *ahadith* and rulings inferred from them alongwith answers to many doubts and misconceptions concerning the impermissibility of making animated objects. Some rulings are reproduced below:

1. Making pictures whether by hand or any means of photography is impermissible. It is only permissible to make pictures of non-animated objects.

2. Just as it is impermissible to hand-draw animated objects, similarly, taking pictures with a camera, publishing them or moulding them etc. is also impermissible. However, there is scope under cases of extreme compulsion to get one's picture taken for passports and I.D. cards.

The above was the ruling for making pictures.

As far as the ruling for utilizing them is concerned, the following types of pictures may be brought to use:

- 1) Animated pictures with heads cut off.
- 2) Such animated pictures which are trampled upon e.g. pictures on the soles of shoes or on the floor etc.
- 3) Very tiny animated pictures such as those on rings and buttons.
- 4) Some Jurists have permitted dolls for little children to play with (p.47). However, since there is fear that the impermissibility of animated pictures will diminish from their hearts by excessively playing with dolls, it is better not to let them play with them.

Warning:

The manner in which nowadays, pictures are excessively and recklessly being taken without any sort of hesitation or fear of Almighty Allah at weddings, parties etc. is a matter worthy of consideration, as it is not only a major sin but also a means of immodesty, irreverance and disgrace to women alongwith being a public display of disobedience and opposition to the commands of Almighty Allah. May Allah Almighty save us all from incurring His wrath. It is a pity that even the elders and pious among families tend to overlook this matter which leaves room for this major sin to be committed openly at its highest level. It is the responsibility of the elders and pious to prevent such evident unlawfulness from being committed with utmost morality and sincerity.

Watching Films

Watching films is a collection of many major sins at

one time, such as:

1. Music, its harms have just been mentioned shortly.
2. Dancing and nudity .
3. Looking at i.e. those women whom the Shariah has forbidden us to look at.
4. Free-mixing of men and women
5. Devastation of morality and decent character by showing indecent screen shots
6. Propagation of obscenity and immodesty which falls right under the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

ان الذين يحبون ان تشيع الفاحشة في الذين امنوا لهم عذاب اليم في الدنيا والاخرة والله يعلم وانتم لا تعلمون

Indeed for those who like that obscenity be widespread among those who believe, is a tormenting punishment in this world and the Hereafter and Allah knows and you don't know. (Sura An-Noor:19)

7. Criminal brainwashing: The role which films and other TV programs have played in brainwashing and creating a criminal mind and increasing the crime rate is much too evident and cannot be denied.

These are only some of the harms of films, otherwise, in reality from beginning to end they are filled with various types of evils and harms. May Allah Almighty save the coming generations from it. Ameen.

Stage Drama

There isn't much difference between films and stage drama apart from the fact that films are shown on a

screen and stage drama is performed live and usually pictures aren't taken. Otherwise, all of the other above-mentioned evils are present in it.

Reading Novels¹

Reading such novels which are slanderous and contain abusive language, obscenity, immorality, exhortation to commit crimes, stories of romance, love-affairs etc. as is the case of most novels found on the bookshelves today, merely for the sake of passing time and leisure, is nothing but to waste one's precious time, and if they effect the moral character and nature of a person as is most commonly observed nowadays, then it is impermissible to read such novels.

Listening to Commentary and Sports Highlights¹

It is allowed to listen to commentary and sports highlights on the radio now and then with moderation within suitable limits subject to the condition that it doesn't lead to excessive indulgence, negligence in religious and worldly duties and doesn't create love and affection for the non-believers.

Conclusion

These were some of the famous sports and games of the current era alongwith some hobbies and pastimes which have been analyzed from the Islamic point of view. Basically, the following points may be concluded from the detailed account given in this book:

1. Each and every second of one's life is very precious and should be appreciated and utilized in its correct manner and place.

1. The following two headings have been added by the translator with the consent of the compiler

2. It is not correct under any circumstance to make amusement and play the purpose and object of life. To do so is to invite ruin and loss at a collective and individual level in this world and the Hereafter.

3. Islam dislikes laziness and idleness and emphasizes agility and alertness. Therefore, such amusement and play within the limits of Sharia which are purposeful and beneficial and are not made the sole aim and purpose of life is permissible from the Islamic perspective.

4. Those games should be played which The Prophet ﷺ has emphasized and are beneficial for jihad and fulfilling the commandments of Almighty Allah and rights of others.

May Allah The Most High enable us all to wholeheartedly act upon the teachings of Islam in all spheres of life, accomplish good deeds with sound mind and health and fulfil the commandments of Almighty Allah with agility and alertness so that we may undertake the journey of this ever-perishing temporary abode with ease and comfort and reach our ultimate destination of the everlasting hereafter with utmost success and prosperity. Ameen.

والفرح والسرور والبهجة والسرور
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والفرح والسرور في العمل لله رب العالمين

